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The New York Times

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Why Vance still trumps Rubio in '28

Ross Douthat

OPINION

For the first year of the second Trump presidency, JD Vance served primarily as the White House's designated tough guy. Rather than a softener of Trumpian harshness, he was charged with being (or chose to be) tougher than the president himself, whether that meant publicly pressuring Volodymyr Zelensky or defending the Minneapolis immigration crackdown or making a symbolic flight to Greenland, the frozen object of the president's desire.

In the past several months, Vance's role has changed. He was the most prominent internal skeptic of the president's decision to attack Iran and then the would-be diplomatic disentangler of the Iranian knot. (He has also embarked on a — somewhat — culturally conciliatory book tour and welcomed a new son.)

The vice president's initial opposition to the war may not impede his political future.

Because I think that the Iran war has been a folly and a snare, I have greatly preferred this version of the Vance vice presidency to the version that seemed subsumed into id-driven conservative politics. By contrast, while I thought that Marco Rubio's performance in his first year as secretary of state was extremely effective, Rubio's performance vis-à-vis Iran has often been a profile in evasion, letting other officials take risks to either own the war or seek a peace while he keeps his options open.

Republican Party politics, however, often do not conform to my preferences, and the version of Vance that I've preferred is also the version who seems to his internal G.O.P. enemies to be politically weakened. From swarming online attacks to stinging critiques from The Wall Street Journal and Ben Shapiro, there's a palpable sense in the Vance-skeptical parts of the right that the vice president is unusually vulnerable and that a Rubio scenario for 2028 might actually be viable.

The Vance skeptics have some data on their side. Rubio has crept up on Vance in a new 2028 New Hampshire primary poll and sits not that far below the vice president in betting markets. And you can certainly make a case that being initially right about the Iran war doesn't offer much political upside to the

DOUTHAT, PAGE 10

The New York Times publishes opinion from a wide range of perspectives in hopes of promoting constructive debate about consequential questions.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY EMILE DUCKE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

A portrait of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's former supreme leader who was killed at the beginning of the U.S.-Israeli attack, looming over the streets of Tehran this month.

Defiance amid suffering

IRAN DISPATCH
TEHRAN

A journey in Iran reveals a complicated reality of resilience, unity and anger

BY ABDI LATIF DAHIR

Before I had even set foot in Iran, the country had begun telling me a version of its modern-day story.

It started on the Iran Air flight. Tucked into the seat pocket in front of every passenger was a leaflet bearing the face of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the country's supreme leader who was killed months earlier, at the onset of the U.S.-Israeli attacks on Iran. The message was unmistakable. Before visitors saw Tehran's streets or spoke to a single Iranian, they were being introduced to a nation in mourning, one determined to highlight the foreign aggression it had endured.

When I reached the airport, portraits of Ayatollah Khamenei were watching over the arrivals hall. Giant banners proclaimed endurance. Posters and flags called for revenge. The message from Iran's leaders was clear: The country had suffered. It had survived, and the world needed to see both.

I arrived in Iran in early July as part of the first team of New York Times journalists allowed into the country since the war began in late February. Before that, thousands of protesters were killed following antigovernment protests that began in late December. We were allowed to report on Ayatollah Khamenei's funeral ceremonies, accompanied by a government-appointed translator and a guide.

We spent several days reporting in Tehran, the capital, before traveling to Mashhad, the birthplace of the ayatollah and the city where he would be buried. During our visit, the war, which had briefly paused under a fragile cease-fire, began flaring again.

While the Iran we encountered was shaped by war, it was not defined by it alone.

Even as the state projected strength, resilience and national unity, the people we met revealed a more complicated reality. We found grief accompanied by a fierce sense of national pride, opposition to the government tempered by unease over foreign intervention, outwardly liberal lifestyles unfolding alongside religious mourning, and anger at Israel and the United States alongside frustration with economic hardship and state restrictions.

Understanding Iran meant holding all of those realities in view at once.

ENTER TEHRAN

Our first stop was Golestan Palace.

The government's choice was hardly accidental. It wanted to show how the war had reached beyond military targets to places central to Iran's history and identity.

The sprawling UNESCO World Heritage site dates to a chapter of Iranian history that predates the Islamic Republic. Once the ceremonial seat of the Qajar dynasty, it was where Persian kings held court beneath glittering mirrored ceilings and elaborate tilework.

Now parts of it bore fresh scars after being damaged in a strike targeting a judiciary building nearby.

Shadi Jafari, who led the media tour, said it was "unfortunate" how the palace

IRAN, PAGE 4

Selling bags in central Tehran, a sign of normal life in parts of the city. As a government guide observed in one restaurant, for some "it's as if Ayatollah Khamenei didn't die."

HOW THE U.S.-IRAN CEASE-FIRE UNRAVELED

A truce that looked like a success fell apart as ships passing through the Strait of Hormuz faced obstacles. *PAGE 4*

Momentum in war draws investor eyes to Ukraine

GDANSK, POLAND

Talks over reconstruction focus on private funding and business opportunities

BY ANDREW E. KRAMER

The mood has shifted on the war in Ukraine. Just ask the businessmen who sipped cocktails and toasted deals one recent evening at a party outside a hip dockside cafe.

The party followed a conference in Gdansk, Poland, on the postwar reconstruction of Ukraine. Previous gatherings revolved around donor assistance. This year, the emphasis was private investment — a view of Ukraine not as a battered victim but as a large postwar market on a path to European Union membership.

The change was a sign of a more upbeat assessment among diplomats, military analysts and businessmen of Kyiv's prospects in the war. The front line is still a crucible of drone-fueled violence, and Russian missiles continue to streak into Ukrainian cities. But Russia's advances have been mostly halted, and Ukraine is hitting back regularly, including with strikes on Moscow.

The overarching pitch at the conference was to put money into Ukraine even as it remains at war. Any such investment is a wager that Ukraine will deny Russia its broad ambitions in the conflict and remain an independent state.

Among the 7,500 attendees was Jeremy Lewin, the U.S. State Department's under secretary for foreign assistance and humanitarian affairs. In a speech, he said this was the moment to "invest in the D.I.B.," or the defense industrial base, in Ukraine.

The conference produced 160 agreements that netted Ukraine about $11 billion in private investment and aid, according to Yuliia Svyrydenko, who until earlier this month was Ukraine's prime minister.

The Export-Import Bank of the United States announced an up to $300 million line of credit for Naftogaz, Ukraine's state oil and gas company, to buy American construction equipment and oil industry services.

For now, Ukraine's economy is propped up by international aid. But the country's long-term prospects are potentially lucrative. Ukraine holds one of Europe's largest known reserves of natural gas, with an estimated value of about $300 billion.

"People are looking at serious business opportunities" in Ukraine, said Duncan Nightingale, the chairman of the board of Naftogaz. The forum buzzed with "a very high level of optimism," he said.

Ukraine still faces battlefield challenges, including a slow but steady Rus-

UKRAINE, PAGE 8

France, broiling, turns to Spain for survival tips

CESAR MANSO/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES

Fighting a wildfire near San Martín de Valdeiglesias, Spain, on Sunday. In recent days, blazes in Spain and France have forced hundreds of thousands to evacuate.

PARIS

A government delegation hopes to learn how to cope with very hot weather

BY MARK LANDLER

Jean-Pierre Farandou grew up in the sunbaked southwest of France, north of the Pyrénées mountain range, which divides France from Spain. His grandparents, he recalls, were farmers who rose to work in the cool predawn hours and rested in the heat of the day, the French equivalent of a Spanish siesta.

So, when Mr. Farandou, now France's labor minister, was searching for ways to respond to the heat waves that have scorched France, he instinctively cast his eye toward Spain. Mr. Farandou contacted his Spanish counterpart, Yolanda Díaz, and proposed a field trip to Madrid, the capital, to explore how Spain has adapted to its climate.

"France is discovering that in summer, it will become Spain," Mr. Farandou, 69, said in a recent interview. "It is a country that resembles us," he added. "We know that Spain works, even when it's hot."

In September, when the French government's need to respond to heat waves will presumably have eased, Mr. Farandou and his small delegation will spend a few days in Spain, talking to government officials, business executives, union leaders, academics and ordinary people. The goal is to understand how Spaniards organize their society to cope with frequent spells of extreme heat.

Some of the measures are obvious and already being tried in France: shifting work hours to earlier in the day, particularly for outdoor or manual workers; frequent rests, which help people recover from sleep lost during heat waves; and an emphasis on drinking fluids.

Spain also provides paid leave during climate-related disruptions, though it

FRANCE, PAGE 2

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PAGE TWO

DMITRY KOSTYUKOV FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Trying to stay cool in Paris during a heat wave last month. The French health authorities recorded nearly 6,000 excess deaths from June 17 to July 2, when temperatures spiked.

Broiling, France turns to Spain

FRANCE, FROM PAGE 1

adopted that after disastrous floods in Valencia in 2024 rather than because of heat waves. In France, the Green Party recently proposed five days a year of paid vacation to protect workers during extreme heat, an idea that drew headlines even if stands little chance of becoming law.

France and Spain share another climate-related scourge: wildfires. In recent days, rapidly spreading blazes near Madrid and Bordeaux have engulfed fields, forests and homes, forcing more than 300,000 people to evacuate or take shelter, with no idea what they will find when they can finally return.

To Mr. Farandou, Spain's culture is as intriguing as its laws. Spanish habits of daily life — from midday siestas to late-night dinners — reflect a long history of living with heat. Transplanting those cultural adaptations to France, particularly the country's north, would be tricky, he acknowledged.

"Adapting through regulations is one thing, but the real, major challenge is cultural adaptation," said Mr. Farandou, a businessman who ran France's national railway, S.N.C.F., before joining the government last year.

In seeking to change habits, experts say, France is looking for low-cost solutions to an expensive problem. Behavioral changes are cheaper than major investments in infrastructure, such as the widespread installation of air-conditioning and "net zero" policies, which seek to reduce the carbon emissions that are the main culprit for a warming climate.

"Acting on our time schedules, things like that — they don't cost a penny," said Sonia Lavadinho, an urban anthropologist in Bern, Switzerland. "You can understand why a government would like to implement these changes."

But Spanish habits, other experts warn, should not be viewed as a magic bullet. For one, traditional Spanish customs, like the siesta or earlier workday, are neither ubiquitous nor available to the people most vulnerable to heat: agricultural laborers, construction workers, delivery people and cleaners.

Moreover, Spain still struggles to protect its population. Roughly one in three Spanish households are unable to keep their homes adequately cool in summer, said Christian Oltra, a senior researcher at the Center for Energy, Environmental and Technological Research, a government-affiliated think tank in Madrid.

LUDOVIC MARIN/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES

France's labor minister, Jean-Pierre Farandou, left, and the health minister, Stephanie Rist, speaking at an emergency shelter during high temperatures in Paris last month.

In seeking to change habits, experts say, France is looking for low-cost solutions to an expensive problem.

"Spain can be genuinely more accustomed to heat than its neighbors and still carry a very substantial health burden," Mr. Oltra said. "The most accurate description, in my view, is that Spain is partially and unevenly adapted — a valuable case to learn from, rather than a straightforward success story."

However imperfect, Mr. Farandou said, Spain was better weatherproofed than France. He noted that many French administrative arrangements dated to the Napoleonic era and were singularly ill suited to a hotter climate.

While August is a vacation month, for example, when many flee stifling cities for cooler climes, June is typically hectic, packed with school exams, sports tournaments and construction projects. This year, all that activity coincided with the most intense June heat wave on record.

The French health authorities recorded nearly 6,000 excess deaths from June 17 to July 2, a period when the temperatures rose above 40 degrees Celsius, or 104 degrees Fahrenheit. Desperate for relief, thousands of people jumped into canals, rivers and other waterways, leading to 90 deaths.

Mr. Farandou suggested that local authorities keep pools open at night so families could use them after school and work. Schools, he said, should move up exams, though even that might not help, given that France's first heat wave this year occurred in late May.

At workplaces that require a dress code, such as government ministries, he said he supported allowing employees to go without ties, jackets or long trousers in hot weather.

Architecture is another area where Spain offers lessons. Its older houses have thick walls and narrow windows with shutters, blinds and awnings to block the sun.

Many French houses have shutters, too, though in modern apartments, large windows are prized. In Paris, the familiar zinc roofs that cover almost four-fifths of the buildings sizzle under the sun, making life unbearable for those who live underneath them.

The most obvious change, of course, would be to install air-conditioning. In Spain's hottest regions, Mr. Oltra said, three-quarters of the houses use cooling systems. But in France, as in other northern European countries, air-conditioning is a political lightning rod. Critics note that it worsens climate change by using lots of electricity and pumping hot air outside the buildings it cools.

Mr. Farandou, who began his career at an American mining company in Denver, said he favored installing cooling systems in schools, hospitals, nursing homes and other places with vulnerable people. But he said that American-style air-conditioning was not a solution that would work in France.

It is not an accident that Mr. Farandou is visiting Spain instead of the United States, Asia or the Middle East, where many buildings are also heavily air-conditioned. Those places are too distant, culturally and geographically, to be useful models for France, he said. Even trying to live more like their Spanish neighbors will be a stretch for the French, he said, though they will have little choice.

"Deep down, I have this conviction," Mr. Farandou said: The French people "will have to change something relatively profound in order to adapt to these very long periods of intense heat."

Ségolène Le Stradic contributed reporting.

Pompeii ceiling, depicting a love story, is restored

ROME

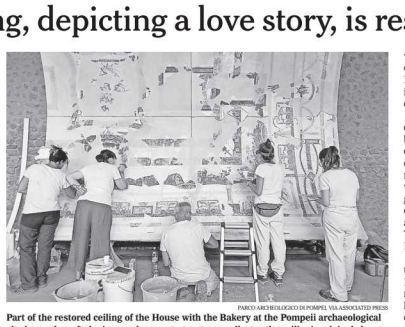
About quarter of fresco has been pieced together using collected fragments

BY ELISABETTA POVOLEDO

Working with hundreds of fragments of plaster recovered from the ruins of Pompeii, archaeologists this month presented a restored frescoed vault from an ancient home that the park's director described as a "magnificent" puzzle depicting the god of revelry and the princess who helped navigate Crete's labyrinth.

The restoration has been years in the making, the director, Gabriel Zuchtriegel, said in a video message. The pieces have been gradually collected since excavations began in 2023 in what is known as the House with the Bakery. On this site, researchers have recently found what they call a "bakery-prison" and evidence of the Pompeian taste for a pizza-like pie.

The vault is a rare artifact from Pompeii, said Alessandro Russo, an archaeologist at the site, who explained that although many wall frescoes have been excavated, only some 20 ceilings have survived.



PARCO ARCHEOLOGICO DI POMPEI, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS

Part of the restored ceiling of the House with the Bakery at the Pompeii archaeological site in southern Italy. A curved support structure replicates the ceiling's original shape.

Ceilings were typically "false-vaults" made from wooden structures and lined with closely bound reeds; those were then covered in plaster that provided a base for the frescoes. Over time, the organic parts disintegrated, so few have survived, he explained.

As puzzles go, the full reconstruction of the vault, which covered a banquet room on the first floor, is bound to be tricky. Though some 1,000 fragments have been found so far, only about a fourth of the ceiling has been recomposed. Other pieces remain missing or have yet to be identified.

Buried by an eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 A.D. under tons of ash, rock and lapilli, Pompeii has over the centuries become a powerful symbol of the transience of life and human impotence when nature unleashes its power. Since excavations began in the 18th century, Pompeii has provided precious insights into the lives and habits of its ancient denizens.

The central image of the vault was decorated with a mythological scene, but only a few fragments remain. By comparing existing fragments in the decorative border, especially numerous references to the god of wine, Dionysus, with other ancient works, archaeologists managed to identify the depiction of the popular love story of Dionysus and Ariadne, the princess who helped Theseus escape the minotaur's maze, Mr. Russo said.

The banquet room was part of a villa that belonged to Aulus Rustius Verus, a Pompeian magistrate. Its excavation in recent years has already made headlines. Some areas, specifically what archaeologists called the "bakery-prison," exposed the bleak existence of enslaved people two millenniums ago.

The fragments of the banquet room vault have been inserted in a curved support structure replicating its original shape, "the most innovative element of the entire project," according to a statement from the archaeologists.

The structure allows new fragments to be added seamlessly as they emerge, "transforming the restoration into an open and updatable process," the statement said.

Japanese scientist who won Nobel Prize

SUSUMU TONEGAWA
1939-2026

BY DYLAN LOEB MCCLAIN

Susumu Tonegawa, a Japanese molecular biologist who won the Nobel Prize in 1987 for figuring out how the body can produce sufficient antibodies to combat a multitude of infections, and who later advanced the understanding of how the brain works by discovering how memories are stored, died on July 11 at his home in San Mateo, Calif. He was 86.

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where Dr. Tonegawa was a professor, announced his death.

"Few scientists have reshaped our understanding of biology as profoundly," Myriam Heiman, the director of M.I.T.'s Picower Institute for Learning and Memory, which Dr. Tonegawa founded in 1994, said in a statement. "His intellectual fearlessness, extraordinary creativity and relentless pursuit of fundamental questions opened entirely new frontiers in both immunology and neuroscience."

For decades, scientists were confounded by the antibodies created in the white blood cells known as B lymphocytes.

Those antibodies, which fight disease, are shaped like Y's, with two long and two short symmetrical chains of proteins built from amino acids, all bound together by bridges of sulfur atoms. Most of the long proteins and some of the short ones are considered constants because they are the same in all antibodies.

At the end of each strand are variable amino acids that allow the antibodies to bind to antigens on an array of infections, disabling them. A common analogy is that the constant amino acids are like the shaft of a key, and the variable ones are the notches that turn the lock. As with a key, each combination of notches is unique.

Even so, scientists were puzzled by how the antibodies could create enough combinations to fight millions of infections.

One suggestion was that it was an evolutionary adaptation, passed down from generation to generation in the genes, or what is known as the germ line. But the human body has only about 20,000 genes, so it seemed unlikely that there would be enough to create all the permutations required to fight so many diseases.

Another theory was that the body developed its defenses in somatic cells — in other words, that there were a limited number of antibody genes at birth, but the body was capable of diversifying and building up its defenses over time by modifying those genes.

For a long time, scientists lacked the technology to do the kind of experiments that might have helped them solve the puzzle.

In 1974, while Dr. Tonegawa was working at the Basel Institute for Immunology in Switzerland, he decided to tackle the problem.

In a labor-intensive process that took months, he and an assistant made hybrid probes of messenger RNA — the single-stranded molecule that conveys the genetic information of DNA to other genes — to examine both the DNA of the cancer known as myeloma and that of the embryo tissue of mice. The probes bonded with complementary pieces of DNA, allowing the scientists to identify specific DNA sequences in the tissues they were analyzing. With that information, they were able to graph and compare the patterns in the myeloma and embryo tissues.

The results, which were entirely different, allowed them to see that antibodies were made by combining some of the variable amino acids, often in conjunction with constant amino acids, to create new amino acid chains. In creating some of the new chains, parts of the coding in the DNA strands had been altered; in some cases, the coding had been removed altogether.

Antibodies, they finally understood, could be created in a variety of ways, which is vital given the number of foreign antigens the body must confront.

The debate was over: The somaticeans, as Dr. Tonegawa called them, had won.

In 1976, he published the first in a series of influential papers on his findings. He continued to advance his research, working with others at the Basel lab, and in 1987 became the first Japanese scientist to win the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine, "for his discovery of the genetic principle for generation of antibody diversity."

The applications of Dr. Tonegawa's discovery, the Nobel committee noted, could include making vaccines more effective, developing immunological therapies and figuring out how to combat autoimmune diseases that occur when antibodies begin attacking healthy cells.

In 1994, as a professor at M.I.T., Dr. Tonegawa turned his attention to a new subject: neuroscience. After founding the M.I.T. Center for Learning and Memory (now the Picower Institute), he focused on understanding how memories are stored in the brain.

Using state-of-the-art technology, he looked at a group of cells known as engrams, in the hippocampus — the part of the brain responsible for integrating new information into memory — and elsewhere. Dr. Tonegawa discovered that memories are created in the engram cells from a variety of elements, including experiences and perceptions of space, time and the physical characteristics of objects.

In an interview, Li-Huei Tsai, a neuroscientist who succeeded Dr. Tonegawa as the director of the Center for Learning and Memory, equated the process to the way an orchestra combines multiple instruments to produce a piece of music.

BRIAN SNYDER/REUTERS

Susumu Tonegawa in 2005. The molecular biologist showed how antibodies can fight infection and how memories are stored.

In testing on mice, Dr. Tonegawa supplied engram cells with novel information, creating new and distinct memories. Those experiments with altering memory, Dr. Heiman said, may eventually be useful in treating PTSD and degenerative brain diseases like Alzheimer's by modifying or even suppressing negative memories.

Susumu Tonegawa was born on Sept. 5, 1939, in Nagoya, Japan, the second son of Tsutomu and Miyoko Tonegawa. His father was an engineer for a textiles company, and the family moved frequently for his job.

At Kyoto University, Susumu became fascinated with molecular biology. After graduating in 1963, he spent a couple of months working in the laboratory of Itaru Watanabe, at the university's Institute for Virus Research.

At Dr. Watanabe's suggestion, he left to study at the University of California San Diego, which had a new doctoral program in molecular biology. He earned his Ph.D. in 1968 and then did postdoctoral work at the nearby Salk Institute for Biological Studies, in the laboratory of Renato Dulbecco, a future Nobel laureate in medicine.

In 1971, Dr. Tonegawa went to work at the Basel Institute for Immunology. He was recruited to M.I.T. in 1981 by Salvador E. Luria, who had shared the Nobel in 1969 for his work on viruses.

Dr. Tonegawa's first marriage, to Kyoko Sakita, ended in divorce. He married Mayumi Yoshinari in 1985.

At a conference of Nobel winners in Tokyo in 2017, Dr. Tonegawa was asked to define creativity. "I don't feel I am a very creative scientist. I wish I could be more creative," he replied, to laughter.

"But if you force me to think about it," he added, "I can come up with three simple concepts. One is you have to be very curious about something. No. 2, you have to have an unfailing urge to address the question you have. No. 3, I think it helps to try to combine knowledge in at least two different fields where people don't necessarily interact."

TOBBE GUSTAVSSON/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dr. Tonegawa accepting his Nobel Prize in 1987 from King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden. He was the first Japanese scientist to win the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine.

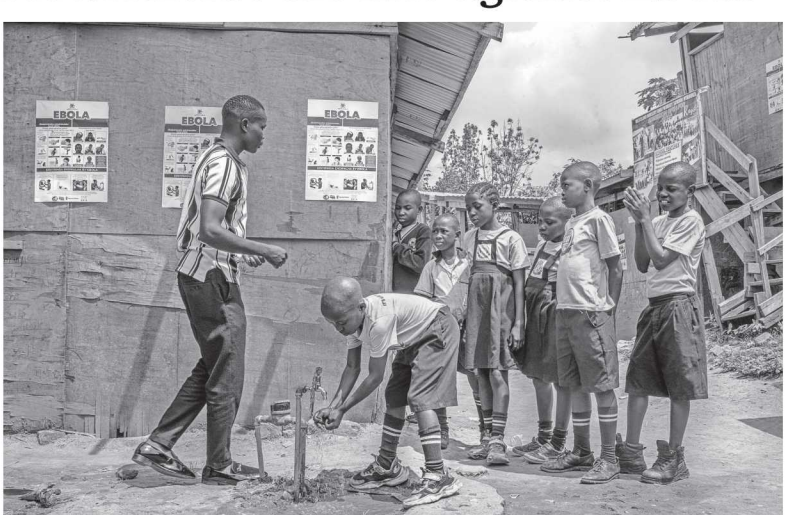
World

Ugandan town holds the line against Ebola

BUNDIBUGYO, UGANDA

Place that gave the name to the current virus strain stops it with a border rope

BY MATTHEW MPOKE BIGG



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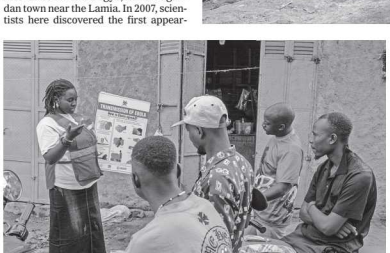


PHOTOGRAPHS BY STUART TIBAWESWA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Clockwise from top: students at Westland Nursery and Primary School in Bundibugyo, Uganda, learning how to properly wash their hands; a thin rope marking the closed border between Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo; a Red Cross Uganda team member carrying out an Ebola sensitization campaign in Bundibugyo.

A rope stretched across a bridge. That was all Uganda needed to show that its border with the Democratic Republic of Congo was closed.

Until recently, the bridge over the Lamia River bustled with activity. Ugandan farmers crossed to tend their crops in Congo, where land is cheaper. Every morning, Congolese children in bright uniforms walked across the bridge to attend village schools in Uganda.

But traffic across the bridge came to a standstill in May, as Uganda declared its border of more than 500 miles (800 kilometers) with Congo was closed, days after the World Health Organization declared a new outbreak in eastern Congo.

A soldier seated on a plastic chair was the only sign of life on the Ugandan side on a recent afternoon. On the Congolese side, a group of women washed clothes in the river and laid them on rocks to dry.

"People used to cross into Congo to get cassava and bananas and carry them on their backs," said Mugaazu Philip, a Ugandan intelligence official who sat in a hut scanning the river recently. "But since the closure, nobody has come across."

The Ebola outbreak has particular resonance in Bundibugyo, a small Ugandan town near the Lamia. In 2007, scientists here discovered the first appearance of an unusual Ebola species and named it after the town.

This year, the Bundibugyo virus returned, this time in eastern Congo. The species is so rare that it caught health officials off guard. They had been testing for more common types of Ebola. Those initial tests came back negative. They learned only later that Bundibugyo was responsible for the outbreak.

Uganda hastily closed its border with Congo. The World Health Organization said this month that the virus has killed more than 1,300 people and infected at least 3,000 in Congo but warned that the country's real numbers may be two to four times higher.

The new outbreak has revived painful memories for health workers in Bundibugyo, who watched their colleagues die nearly two decades ago of a disease that was only identified as Ebola weeks after it first appeared.

Ezekiel Kisughu, a nurse at Bundibugyo's hospital, was infected in October 2007 while treating the head of the local Red Cross, who had been brought to the hospital desperately ill.

"People thought it might be poison," he said. "We called it the 'unknown disease.'" None of the nurses had protective gear and there was no information, he recalled. The patients died, and one by one the nurses started to fall sick and perish. Then came Mr. Kisughu's turn.

He said that he barely survived and that the illness was so traumatic that he remembers the exact date he was discharged: Dec. 7, 2007. The W.H.O. announced that the town was dealing with an Ebola outbreak while he was still in the hospital, he said.

For months after his release, he said the town treated him as a pariah because of the stigma of the disease.

Much has changed in the town since then. Uganda has developed a global reputation for its efficiency in containing infectious diseases, including H.I.V., Covid-19 and Ebola. While the disease is raging through communities in Congo, Uganda seems to have it under control.

There have been 20 confirmed Ebola cases in Uganda thus far, but the country has not registered a new case in more than a month. Fifteen of those patients came across the border, some to seek treatment in Ugandan hospitals. Aside from two patients who died, the rest have recovered. The others were quarantined and released, the authorities said this month. Bundibugyo has not recorded a single infection in this outbreak.

"They know how to handle it," said Dr. Wessam Mankoula, who leads the country's Ebola response unit at the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, referring to Ugandan health officials.

The effect of that expertise in Bundibugyo is to see life carry on as normal, despite the threat just across the river, which is often shallow enough to ford.

Schools, shops and offices here remain open, though hand-washing stations have been set up at the entrances to public places. Teams play soccer on the field beside the town's government offices every evening. No one in the town wears a mask.

Dr. Christopher Kiyita, the top health officer in Bundibugyo, said that in his 15 years on the job he had faced down several Ebola outbreaks, supported by the national government. He said he regularly drives the nine hours to the capital to attend important meetings.

But the border closure has hit families and businesses in other ways.

International public health experts say that border closures are counterproductive during outbreaks because they penalize countries for coming clean about the virus. The closure remains state policy, even though several residents said it was hurting the economy.

Mirembe Marvin, the head teacher of one modest village primary school, said it was getting difficult to keep the place open. Parents who used to make money across the border are now struggling to pay school fees.

"They are used to trading in Congo, but now they can't," he said. One day this month, teachers at the school showed the children how to watch for signs of Ebola and how to thoroughly wash their hands. They stood in a semicircle in the schoolyard, smearing soap on their fingers and rubbing it under their nails.

Since the initial Ebola outbreak nearly two decades ago, Bundibugyo has been changing.

People are abandoning subsistence farming in favor of cocoa, residents said, driving more people into the cash economy. Cocoa trees, with their distinctive big leaves and bulbous pods, now dominate the landscape around Bundibugyo.

The shift may help explain why people have stopped eating wild animals in the town, including bats and monkeys, the residents said. In addition, the establishment of two nearby national parks has made it harder for people to hunt such wildlife.

Scientists say that fruit bats are the likely reservoir host for Ebola viruses, which can then spread to other animals, including monkeys, and into the human population.

For all the changes, Mr. Kisughu, the nurse, said that proximity to Congo leaves the town — and Uganda — vulnerable.

"The nature of our border is very tricky," he said. "It is porous, and we are dependent on one another."

Musinguzi Blanshe contributed reporting from Bundibugyo.

Hurt by soccer stigmatization, Argentines fight back

BUENOS AIRES

BY EMMA BUBOLA AND DANIEL POLITI

HIROKO MASUIKE/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Clashes after the World Cup final between Argentina and Spain. "The World Cup enabled some sort of international court in which Argentina is the accused," one journalist said.

Argentines were having enough of a rough time this month after watching their national team's decisive defeat in the World Cup final and tears from Lionel Messi. Then came what felt like an enormous, persistent wave of global hatred against their nation.

Fans of opposing teams, celebrities of all kinds and a surge of social media users were directing their scorn not only at the Argentine team but at the country as a whole — turning the celebrated champions of the 2022 World Cup into the villains of 2026.

"We lost, and now we're being called every name under the sun," said Mercedes Maspero, an Argentine researcher.

In part, the animosity was fueled by speculation that Argentina had received favorable treatment from soccer's governing body, FIFA, and by the team's sometimes aggressive style of play.

Then there was the postmatch brawl after the July 19 final, in which several Argentine players and staff attacked Spanish opponents.

The criticism was also linked to offfield behavior during the tournament, including Argentine players captured on video singing a racist chant about French players in 2024, an incident that critics resurfaced this year. An Argentine fan also apparently directed racist abuse at IShowSpeed, a Black streamer and social media influencer.

But the anti-Argentine sentiment came to be framed around a wider critique of Argentine society, history, and the country as a whole.

Samuel L. Jackson, the actor, reposted an Instagram story urging Black fans not to support Argentina for historically being "one of, if not the most racist country in the world."

The American comedian Eric André celebrated Argentina's loss against Spain in an expletive-laden Instagram story in which he accused Argentina of being racist, violent and full of crime.

Mr. André, in a statement, said that he "was referring to the history of their government's policies, not every single citizen." A representative for Mr. Jackson did not respond to a request for comment.

Some celebrities, like the singers Patti Smith and Rosalía, reposted (and later apologized for sharing) content that was interpreted as being critical of Argentina, and the connection between racism and anti-Argentine support even reached a hearing at the U.S. Congress.

Many bolstered their criticisms with accusations that the Argentine national team does not have any Black players.

The denunciations of Argentina started weeks before the final, but Argentines seemed too busy living the dream of a consecutive World Cup title to pay much attention. Immediately after their loss in the final, they were overwhelmed with sadness. But last week, the lament that washed over Argentines has given way to indignation, confusion and anger over the global hatred directed at them.

Even President Javier Milei responded. "They are jealous of us," he posted on Instagram. "We are good at almost everything."

Some commentators tried to address the substance of the condemnations.

"The World Cup enabled some sort of international court in which Argentina is the accused," said Pedro Rosemblat, a prominent Argentine journalist, on his streaming show.

Judgment was coming from people in the United States, he said, which has a history of racism, or European nations that had started wars, engaged in colonization and wrestle with xenophobia.

And verdicts were rendered, Mr. Rosemblat added, by actors and celebrities "who would not be able to explain anything about our history, our society and our civilization."

Many Argentines condemned the racist chants of players and fans and the team's physical attacks on their opponents. They admitted that their country, like many others, has problems with racism. But they rejected that problematic aspects of their history should prompt a sweeping stigmatization of their nation and team.

"Argentina has its share of racism, but no more than any other Latin American country," an antiracism group made up of Argentines of Indigenous origins called "Identidad Marrón," or "Brown Identity," wrote in an Instagram post.

Daniel Schteingart, an Argentine researcher, pointed out on social media that the Integrated Values Survey, a study and survey that measures values in dozens of countries, found that 4 percent of Argentines said they would not like having an immigrant as a neighbor, and less than 3 percent would object to a neighbor of a different race.

Those figures, from the most recent study conducted between 2017 and 2022, were among the lowest in the world.

"It makes sense: Argentina has opened its doors to immigration since the 19th century and has one of the friendliest immigration laws on the planet," Mr. Schteingart wrote.

Argentina has historically provided immigrants with broad access to public education and health care while offering accessible pathways to legal residency. And even though the Milei government has imposed some restrictions, Argentina's immigration policy is still far less strict than that of the United States under President Trump.

"Pointing out real problems is one thing; turning an entire country into a caricature is another," Mr. Schteingart wrote.

Racist incidents have been a dark fixture of European soccer for decades, though recent years have brought far stricter penalties. Argentina, by contrast, has not yet undergone a similar reckoning, as casual slurs and racial innuendos continue to be used.

The criticism arising from the World Cup has also led to a broader look at race relations in Argentina and its treatment of Indigenous and Black people.

Black people once made up a much larger share of the population across the region that became Argentina.

There were many reasons for that decline. Black men were repeatedly and disproportionately mobilized for wars, while poor living conditions contributed to high infant mortality and lower birth rates. Intermarriage changed how many descendants were classified, and mass European immigration reduced the Black community's relative size.

This helped cement an enduring image of Argentina as a white, European nation, one that minimized and left out its African roots from its official history.

Organizations like Identidad Marrón have said that Argentina actually has a much more diverse ethnic mix.

That includes many people of Indigenous descent, among them Argentina's soccer demigod Diego Maradona, who spoke of his native Guaraní roots.

Groups like Identidad Marrón have long said that Argentina's nonwhite population is often the target of discrimination, but they condemned what it called an oversimplified debate.

"If it was so easy, it would mean that national teams with more players of African descent belong to nations that respect their rights," said Alejandro Mamani, a lawyer of Indigenous descent who is part of the group. "And that at their borders, in their seas, there would not be bodies and dinghies adrift."

Lucía Cholakian Herrera and Natalie Alcoba contributed reporting from Buenos Aires.

WORLD

Celebration of a truce morphs into escalation

WASHINGTON

BY MICHAEL CROWLEY

"The Deal with the Islamic Republic of Iran is now complete. Congratulations to all!"

That was how President Trump announced a cease-fire with Iran on June 14 that halted U.S. combat operations and reopened the Strait of Hormuz to commercial shipping.

Mr. Trump was pleased with the deal, which promised to wrap up a conflict that he had promised would be over quickly and ease a spike in U.S. gas prices. "Ships of the World, start your engines. Let the oil flow!" he wrote.

Within a month the agreement was in shambles. The U.S. and Iranian forces began trading strikes again, and ships once more began avoiding the strait for fear of Iranian attacks. After a substantial drop in recent weeks, the price of oil again briefly topped $100 a barrel on Thursday.

What went wrong? Here is how things unraveled.

THE CEASE-FIRE KICKS IN

Mr. Trump's deal with Iran, signed on June 17, initially looked to be a success.

The United States stopped bombing and allowed Iran to temporarily sell and ship its oil. Iran at first did not interfere with ships sailing through the strait. Global oil prices plunged as tankers again sailed through the vital waterway.

But analysts warned that the 14-point document establishing the cease-fire was dangerously vague. While Mr. Trump said it restored freedom of navigation in the strait, Iran made clear that it considered itself in control of the international waterway.

On June 21 Vice President JD Vance flew to Switzerland to kick off talks with Iranian officials, outlined by the cease-fire agreement, for a more comprehensive deal that would determine the long-term future of the strait and of Iran's nuclear program.

TROUBLE IN THE STRAIT

But the strait did not quite return to normal.

Iranian mines laid early in the war still posed a threat in the longtime official shipping route through the middle of the strait, rendering that path unsafe. Their removal would take time.

Two alternate routes emerged. Most ships used a southern route close to Oman designated by a U.N. maritime agency. The U.S. military provided guidance and some air support to protect ships from Iranian mines and potential attacks.

But Iran insisted that ships use a northern route along its coast that it had established before the cease-fire. Iran charged fees for sailing those waters but guaranteed safe passage in return.

Under the cease-fire, Iran agreed not to charge vessels only for 60 days. Mr. Trump said his administration would reject any final peace agreement that included fees or tolls for shipping through the strait.

As more shipping vessels began using the southern route, Iranian officials demanded that ships exclusively use the northern route. Only that way, they said, could Iran ensure their safety, in what critics said amounted to a protection racket.

On June 25 and 27, Iran launched drone attacks on commercial ships following the southern route. U.S. forces retaliated against Iranian targets, and Iran in turn lobbed missiles at U.S. bases in Jordan and Bahrain.

A meeting planned for June 28 between U.S. and Iranian negotiators was canceled. The cease-fire was fracturing.

KENNY HOLSTON/THE NEW YORK TIMES

POOL PHOTO BY GABRIELE CONTINI

Top, a ceremony at Dover Air Force Base in Delaware to honor U.S. Army soldiers killed in action at a Jordanian military base; above, Vice President JD Vance in Lake Lucerne, Switzerland, before meeting with Iranian officials and regional mediators last month.

THINGS FALL APART

On July 4, Iran held a daylong funeral for its former supreme leader, Ali Khamenei, who was killed in a Feb. 28 airstrike at the start of the war. Huge crowds in Tehran called for revenge and carried at least one giant banner vowing to kill the U.S. president.

Three days later, on July 7, three more tankers were attacked in the strait, an action that the U.S. attributed to Iran. That was enough for Mr. Trump. He declared the cease-fire "over" and revoked Iran's ability to sell oil on the open market by restoring U.S. sanctions on any buyers.

The fighting escalated. The United States hit dozens of targets along Iran's coast the next day, and Iran attacked more U.S. military sites in Kuwait, Bahrain and Qatar.

Mr. Trump formally notified Congress on July 10 that war with Iran had resumed. But he also wrote on social media that he had agreed to an Iranian request to continue negotiations.

Yet Mr. Trump warned that such talks would be a "waste of time," complaining that Iran has a history of deceitfully "tapping along" U.S. presidents in negotiations.

On July 11, Iran said it would close the strait "until the end of U.S. interference in the region."

Two days later, Mr. Trump reimposed the naval blockade on Iranian ports he had lifted as part of the cease-fire deal, cutting off Tehran's lucrative black market sales, primarily to Chinese buyers, that evade U.S. sanctions.

With most ships again avoiding the strait, the conflict was back to its status before the cease-fire.

Trump administration officials said an Iran deprived of oil revenue could hold out only for so long against U.S. demands to open the strait and surrender most or all of its nuclear program.

But Iran at a minimum bought itself more time by selling as much as $6 billion of oil during the brief truce, according to the hawkish think tank United Against Nuclear Iran.

ESCALATION AND MORE CASUALTIES

By mid-July the two sides were exchanging daily strikes.

Iranian attacks on U.S. missile defense facilities in Jordan killed three American service members on July 17 and 18. Another American was killed in northern Iraq while disposing of a downed Iranian attack drone.

At a ceremony for the return of the soldiers' remains, Mr. Trump sought to remind Americans why he had gone to war against Iran. "All of them said very strongly, 'We cannot let Iran have a nuclear weapon,'" Mr. Trump said, referring to the soldiers. (He did not say how he might have known their views.)

The fatalities raised the war's U.S. death toll to 18.

More than 1,700 Iranian civilians are estimated to have been killed in the war.

U.S. forces struck Iran daily for nearly two weeks. Mr. Trump threatened to respond to more attacks on ships in the strait by striking bridges and power plants in Iran — a potential war crime if the targets have no military function.

Regional mediators, including Qatar and Pakistan, have been trying to secure a new cease-fire.

According to U.S. officials, Mr. Trump has decided to put off plans to escalate the U.S. assault on Iran, at least for now.

But Mr. Trump is confronting a new threat. Houthi militants in Yemen with close ties to Iran recently claimed that they attacked two Saudi tankers in the Red Sea and have threatened more such attacks in support of their Iranian allies.

Mr. Trump said he would respond to those attacks with "major military punishment."

Survival amid the travails of war

IRAN, FROM PAGE 1

survived centuries of Iranian history only to be scarred by modern war.

Throughout our trip, we encountered reminders everywhere of the strikes' broad reach.

At Sharif University of Technology, one of Iran's premier academic institutions, damaged buildings had crumbled into heaps of concrete and mangled metal. The Iranian space research center had been reduced to a tangle of collapsed floors. The Azadi sports complex, a landmark venue that has long hosted major concerts, sporting events and public gatherings, lay in ruins. American and Israeli officials have said that certain civilian sites are used by Iranian security forces to generate revenue or produce materials that can be used for military purposes.

This destruction — along with the killing of top military, intelligence and political leaders — loomed over the ayatollah's funeral, which coincided with Muharram, the month when Shiite Muslims commemorate the martyrdom of Imam Hussein, the Prophet Muhammad's grandson. This year, the losses of the recent war have been woven into that centuries-old narrative of sacrifice and martyrdom.

Many mourners did not speak of compromise. They wanted retaliation. They wanted President Trump dead. To them, diplomacy was weakness.

At the Grand Mosalla prayer complex in Tehran, one woman told us that Iran had been attacked by the world's most powerful military and was still standing. That, she believed, was victory enough. A man carried a yellowed newspaper from the era of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, who died in 1989, bearing his declaration that "nobody has the right to negotiate with America." Beside it, he held a handwritten sign that read, "This is the result of negotiations."

When Brig. Gen. Ahmad Vahidi, the commander of the powerful Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps, appeared just a few feet from where I stood after the funeral prayers, chants of "Revenge! Revenge!" rippled through the crowd.

It was a sentiment shared by Seyed Mustafa, a businessman who had traveled from the southwestern city of Ahvaz. "Resistance and revenge are the only paths forward," he said.

PARALLEL WORLDS

Only a few miles from where mourners gathered for days, a very different scene unfolded.

In north Tehran, the city's upscale district, young people filled sandwich shops, cafes and boutique storefronts. Luxury cars inched through the nighttime traffic. Young tattooed men in shorts wore fresh bandages from cosmetic nose surgery. Women, dressed in bare-shouldered tops, rode motorcycles, their hair flowing behind them.

At one restaurant where we ate dinner, music featuring a female vocalist poured through the speakers. Only weeks earlier, a female singer had been sentenced to 74 lashes for performing at a concert without wearing a hijab.

Looking around the room, one of the government guides remarked, almost with amusement, "For people here, it's as if Ayatollah Khamenei didn't die."

EVERYDAY SURVIVAL

Beneath the politics, another crisis threaded through many conversations: the struggle to make ends meet.

The war had accelerated financial pressures that many Iranians had been feeling for years because of sanctions, corruption and economic isolation.

Monthslong internet cutoffs had crippled businesses, including parts of Iran's bustling tech sector, leading to mass layoffs. A spiraling currency had eroded purchasing power. University graduates spoke of struggling to find stable work. Those with jobs worried that their wages no longer stretched far enough.

At one restaurant, a worker approached us at the restroom to say the restaurant would be forced to close during the funeral ceremonies, leaving him without the wages he needed to feed his family. He shrugged as he spoke, as though disappointment had become too familiar to provoke outrage.

To many Iranians, the funeral also became a measure of the state's priorities. Even as elaborate mourning ceremonies were staged — complete with misting stations, free water and food — some Iranians described living through water shortages and power cuts.

EXIT IRAN

Our journey ended in Mashhad, where Ayatollah Khamenei was to be buried. Mourners converged on the Imam Reza shrine from across the world. Even here, reminders of war interrupted devotion.

At the arrivals hall of Mashhad airport, dozens of mostly pink and blue backpacks were displayed in memory of children killed when a U.S. strike hit their school in the southern city of Minab early in the war. The bags were paired with roses and children's shoes.

At a bakery in the city's bazaar, a worker taped to the door a photograph of his nephew, a sailor who he said was killed when a U.S. submarine torpedoed his ship.

Just hours before, the United States had reimposed sanctions on Iranian oil and conducted new strikes inside Iran. The cease-fire was already beginning to unravel, giving way to a wave of fighting that has once again engulfed the wider region.

Hours after the ayatollah's burial, we drove toward the Afghan border. At immigration, two officers motioned me over to their booth. With only limited English, one officer typed some words into a translation app on his phone and held up the screen for me.

"What do you think of Iran and its people?" it read.

As I looked up from the phone, the other asked, smiling: "Do you think we are strong?"

They were, in many ways, the questions that had followed us throughout the trip.

Iran had spent my entire journey asking the world to recognize its strength.

Its people had answered with something far more complicated: strength, yes, but also grief, defiance, weariness, fear and hope.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY EMILE DUCKE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Top, mourners at the Grand Mosalla prayer complex in Tehran during funeral processions for the nation's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who was to be buried days later in Mashhad; above, backpacks displayed at Mashhad airport in memory of children killed when a U.S. strike hit a school in the southern city of Minab early in the war.

Iranian leader may desire to pursue nuclear weapons

WASHINGTON

BY JULIAN E. BARNES

American intelligence agencies believe that Iran's new supreme leader, Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei, is far more interested than his father and predecessor in pursuing a nuclear weapon, according to officials briefed on the assessments.

Ayatollah Khamenei's father, who was killed at the start of the war in an Israeli attack aided by U.S. intelligence, had sworn off developing a nuclear weapon. While American officials long asserted that Iran wanted to be capable of building a nuclear weapon, many believed Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's hesitancy was genuine.

His successor has never publicly called for Iran to build a nuclear weapon. But U.S. intelligence agencies believe that Mojtaba Khamenei and the harder-line government that emerged after the United States and Israel killed many of Iran's previous leaders have ambitions to develop advanced nuclear weaponry.

The current government has already worked to assert greater control over the Strait of Hormuz and proved a difficult negotiating partner. If the U.S.-Israeli war has made Tehran more, rather than less, likely to pursue a nuclear weapon, it would amount to one more grave consequence of the killing of the supreme leader and the steps toward regime change the Trump administration initially pursued.

American officials caution that most of the intelligence on Mojtaba Khamenei's views comes from before the war. He was badly injured in the first part of the war, and American officials said he has limited his communications and public appearances because of his injuries and also because he does not want to be targeted in an airstrike.

The officials assess that he remains in charge of the government but does not have the absolute authority and influence of his father, who ruled for more than 36 years.

The assessment comes as President Trump is weighing whether to intensify the military campaign against Iran. A determination that the supreme leader is potentially open to pursuing a bomb would provide additional justification for an escalation.

While U.S. officials insist that Tehran has not made any moves to restart its nuclear program, Iran has taken some steps to preserve its nuclear assets after the U.S. strikes on key facilities last year or during pauses in fighting during the current war.

Iran has moved at least some centrifuges, according to American officials, to a heavily fortified underground complex in central Iran that the United States refers to as Pickaxe Mountain.

Dustin Volz and Michael Crowley contributed reporting.

VANTOR, VIA REUTERS

A satellite image provided by Vantor shows an entrance to tunnels at Pickaxe Mountain in Iran, where U.S. officials say that Iran has moved nuclear assets such as centrifuges.

After arrests, brothers' right-wing allies go quiet

Support appears to erode for 'manosphere' leaders facing possible extradition

BY MEGAN TWOHEY, ISABELLA KWAI, MATEI BARBULESCU AND ALAN FEUER

On the morning of July 19, hours after the manosphere influencers Andrew and Tristan Tate were arrested by federal agents in Miami, one of their representatives reached out to Alina Habba.

Not long ago, Ms. Habba, a lawyer, was a vocal supporter of the Tate brothers as they faced allegations of human trafficking and other serious crimes in Romania and Britain. In a podcast appearance in January 2025, shortly after being named a counselor to President Trump, she told Andrew Tate, "I got your back over here."

Now the brothers were in a federal detention center after Britain requested their extradition for a raft of new criminal charges there. Their representative wanted to know: Was Ms. Habba free to talk?

She did not respond, according to two people familiar with the outreach. It was a sign of the brothers' eroding support among their onetime allies on the American right.

In recent years, the Tates had leveraged their enormous following of young men to cultivate support among Mr. Trump's advisers, family members and other prominent conservatives. Those efforts paid off last year when, feeling pressure from members of the new Trump administration, Romanian prosecutors lifted a travel ban on the brothers, freeing them to leave the country and jet-set around the world.

But they are now facing a new level of legal jeopardy. Britain has issued 38 charges against them, including rape and sex trafficking; Andrew Tate was also charged with extreme pornography and indecent images of children. The brothers have denied all of the criminal accusations and called the charges politically motivated.

The extradition request has forced the Trump administration to participate in the process: Federal prosecutors are representing the British government's case in a Miami court.

Mr. Trump does not plan to intervene in the case, said the White House press secretary, Karoline Leavitt. And many of the Tates' allies in the president's orbit, who were once happy to be associated with their brand of hyper-masculinity, now appear to be backing away.

Ms. Habba, who is no longer in the administration but still speaks with Mr. Trump, wants nothing to do with the Tates, according to people familiar with her thinking.

Paul Ingrassia, the acting general counsel of the General Services Administration, who previously served on the Tates' legal team and has lavished praise on Andrew, wrote a post on X shortly after the arrests criticizing "politically driven prosecutions." In a call with The New York Times this month, Mr. Ingrassia said the post was simply articulating his beliefs about the Constitution.

ANDREJ PUNGOVSCHE/GETTY IMAGES

Above, Andrew Tate, right, and Tristan Tate in 2025. They were arrested in Miami this month after Britain requested their extradition. From near right, Tucker Carlson, who has conducted sympathetic interviews of the Tates; and Alina Habba, a former Trump adviser, who once told Andrew Tate in a podcast, "I got your back over here."

AL DRAGO/GETTY IMAGES

KENNY HOLSTON/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Asked if he still supported the Tates, he said, "I have no ongoing connection to them now."

Donald Trump Jr., who once called Andrew Tate a friend and publicly defended him against previous criminal allegations, has said nothing about the arrests. Neither has his younger brother Barron Trump, who had also been friendly with Andrew. Candace Owens, a conservative commentator who backed both brothers on her popular show, has also stayed silent.

The Tates had leveraged their enormous following of young men to cultivate support among prominent conservatives.

Privately, people close to Donald Jr. have played down his relationship with the Tates; one person said he had not spoken with anyone in the administration about their arrests.

Asked by The Times about his retweeting of Tristan Tate on July 18, Roger Stone, a prominent Republican operative, said he did so before the news of their arrests. And Paolo Zampolli, a special envoy for Mr. Trump who had hosted the Tates at a party in Washington two days before the arrests, said he hadn't realized the extent of the allegations against them.

"I didn't know they were arrest material," Mr. Zampolli said in an interview.

Not everyone is pulling back from the brothers. Representative Abe Hamadeh, Republican of Arizona, spoke out against their extradition, writing on social media that "political lawfare is dangerous."

The conservative media star Tucker Carlson, who has conducted sympathetic interviews of the Tates, told The Times, without evidence, that he believed their arrests were related to their outspoken criticism of Israel.

"After decades of ignoring grooming gangs and covering for Jeffrey Epstein, the British and American governments seemed to have lost interest in prosecuting sex crimes," Mr. Carlson said. "Then the Tate brothers criticized Israel, and I was reminded that under certain circumstances they're willing to act."

Joseph McBride, a longtime lawyer for the Tates, disputed that their support had eroded. He said he was not surprised that any Trump official who had previously backed the brothers was now taking a more neutral stance given the administration's role in the legal case.

Mr. McBride said the Tates were focused on fighting the extradition request in court rather than seeking help from Mr. Trump's circle. He said he was unaware that a representative for the Tates had contacted Ms. Habba.

"There's no reason at this point for Trump to parachute in from Air Force One to the courtroom, because we think we'll win in court," Mr. McBride said.

In recent years, there has been only one instance in which the United States has refused an extradition request from Britain.

The Tates, who have American and British citizenship, made their fortunes by running an online pornography business, first in Britain and then Romania, and by selling online courses to young men. One offering was called P.H.D., for "Pimping Hoes Degree."

Romania began its investigation into the brothers in 2022. Two years later, prosecutors in Britain charged the brothers with rape, sexual assault and human trafficking. The two countries agreed that Britain would wait to extradite the Tates until the Romanian criminal investigation was done, but that case has suffered major setbacks.

Since their release from Romania in February 2025, the Tates had been living large, spending time in the United Arab Emirates, Kazakhstan, Hong Kong and Russia. During a January visit to Miami, a video circulated widely of them partying at a club with Nicholas J. Fuentes and other far-right influencers while the song "Heil Hitler" by Ye, the rapper formerly known as Kanye West, blasted from speakers.

They did not go to Britain, where they faced not only the 2024 criminal charges but continuing investigations into other accusations.

In March, a police watchdog group said it was reviewing potential misconduct by the officers who had originally investigated rape and sexual assault allegations against Andrew Tate from 2015. Shortly after, the British police reopened that investigation.

Last year, after the Tates visited Florida, the state's attorney general, James Uthmeier, opened an investigation of the brothers. His office also sent an email to Matthew Jury, a lawyer who represents several Tate accusers in Britain, promising to assist if Britain ordered their extradition, as first reported by The Times of London.

Mr. Jury's law firm passed the message onto Britain's home secretary through an intermediary but did not receive a response, according to a person familiar with the communication.

The Tates were arrested on July 18 as they arrived at a bare-knuckle-boxing event that Andrew was supposed to cohost. British prosecutors said the charges stemmed from incidents that happened between July 2010 and August 2017.

In the days before the arrests, the brothers had been posting on social media from Washington, where they were photographed with Representative Wesley Hunt, Republican of Texas, and partied with Mr. Zampolli.

Mr. McBride said in a statement that the extradition request was approved by a "low-level functionary at the Justice Department who never got approval from leadership." But higher-ups in the agency did sign off on the arrests, according to a person familiar with the matter who was not authorized to discuss it.

The Tates will remain behind bars in Florida as a federal judge considers whether Britain has met the legal threshold for extradition, a process that could take months. If the judge signs off on the extradition request, it will then go to Secretary of State Marco Rubio for final approval.

Asked about the request while traveling in Manila last week, Mr. Rubio said that while the matter is considered by the judge, "there's no role for us to play at this moment or maybe ever."

Lauren Southern, a former conservative influencer who has accused Andrew Tate of raping her in Romania and provided testimony to Romanian authorities, was among those who celebrated news of the extradition request.

"It's been a really wonderful weekend for those of us who are rooting for justice," she told The Times. "Now there's a reckoning, and suddenly everyone wants to pretend they had nothing to do with building this beast."

Reporting was contributed by Michael Crowley, Shawn McCreesh, David Ovalle and Ed Wong.

Democrats reset the Maine Senate race. Now it gets tricky.

BANGOR, MAINE

BY REID J. EPSTEIN AND JESS BIDGOOD

Democrats in Maine have reset a Senate race seen as critical to their party's chances of retaking the chamber after an improvised scramble to swap out a damaged candidate, Graham Platner, for a new one, Troy Jackson, after a wild 17 days.

Now comes the tricky part.

Mr. Jackson, a former State Senate president, is trying to keep alive the grass-roots energy that Mr. Platner built over the past year while distancing himself from the former nominee's personal history. With help from her allies, Senator Susan Collins, the five-term Republican he is trying to defeat, is seeking to tie the two Democrats together in ways Republicans hope will alienate swing voters.

SOPHIE PARK FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

ALEX KENT/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Troy Jackson, left, the Democrat running for Senate in Maine, is trying to portray his Republican opponent, Senator Susan Collins, right, as a rubber stamp for President Trump.

A 100-DAY CONTEST

This dynamic is beginning to shape a 100-day contest that will drench this largely rural state with money and place it at the epicenter of the national fight for Senate control. Democrats have turned to a familiar fixture of state government and a fifth-generation logger from Maine's north woods to make their case against a far-better-funded incumbent who has already defied national headwinds once in the Trump era.

The race will test whether Mr. Jackson can leave behind the baggage of a candidate, in Mr. Platner, who bowed out after a rape allegation that he denies, revelations about a tattoo that resembled a Nazi symbol and a trail of offensive online posts.

By replacing Mr. Platner with Mr. Jackson, Maine Democrats hope to make the race less about their candidate and more about painting Ms. Collins as a tool of the ultrawealthy and a rubber stamp for President Trump on the most pressing matters.

"Who has she served?" Mr. Jackson asked Maine Democrats at the Saturday convention where he was officially selected to be his party's nominee. "She's served Donald Trump."

Ms. Collins, in a brief interview before a Saturday parade in Casco, Maine, signaled an intent to portray her new rival as outside the mainstream and a continuation of the Platner campaign.

"My likely new opponent has adopted exactly the same platform as my old opponent," she said. "It's the democratic socialist platform and it's very similar. So the issues have not changed."

JACKSON'S STRATEGY

It is no secret what Mr. Jackson plans to do: Tie Ms. Collins to Mr. Trump, who lost the statewide vote in Maine in each of his three presidential campaigns.

At the Saturday convention where Democrats picked Mr. Jackson as their new candidate, speaker after speaker cited Ms. Collins's vote for Brett Kavanaugh, the Trump-nominated Supreme Court justice whom Ms. Collins voted to confirm after claiming she received an assurance that he would protect abortion rights.

"She voted with him 96 percent of the time," Mr. Jackson said of Ms. Collins on Saturday. "She helped deliver enormous tax breaks to corporations and the wealthy on our backs. And she voted to confirm Kavanaugh and Gorsuch, the Supreme Court justices who overturned Roe v. Wade."

Making that case will require Mr. Jackson, whose Senate campaign started with zero money two weeks ago, to raise a lot, and quickly. Ms. Collins had $11 million at the end of June, according to her latest campaign finance report. The Senate Republicans' main super PAC, which has announced it will spend $42 million in Maine alone, began attacking Mr. Jackson minutes after he was named the nominee.

Mr. Jackson told reporters after the convention that he had not spoken with Senator Chuck Schumer of New York, the minority leader whose allies control the Senate Democrats' main super PAC, and whom Mr. Jackson said he would not support to remain in his leadership role. Asked if he has enough money to win the race, Mr. Jackson replied: "Not now, but I hope to get it."

"Troy is not a classically trained pianist," said Bev Uhlenhake, a former Maine Democratic Party chairwoman. "He doesn't sound like a typical politician. I think in terms of Mainers, that's OK. They want someone to come to the party who can play the piano and get people dancing."

But in an era when creating content is a key part of movement building, Mr. Jackson has a lot of work to do. He has just one-tenth the Instagram following that Mr. Platner does.

"You can be outspent, but if you keep the attention of the crowd you can offset the money advantage," said David Farmer, a longtime Democratic political operative in Maine. "Troy is going to have to win that attention war."

COLLINS'S APPROACH

Ms. Collins and her allies are now racing to define a new rival after spending months campaigning against someone else. And while the Democrats onstage on Saturday never once mentioned Mr. Platner's name, Ms. Collins and her backers appear determined to make sure nobody forgets it.

"The Graham Platner candidacy," said Josh Tardy, a co-chair of Ms. Collins's campaign, "is the gift that keeps on giving."

While Mr. Jackson and Maine Democrats are making their case against Ms. Collins about policy, some of Ms. Collins's allies aimed their first attacks at Mr. Jackson on his character, after reports that former legislative colleagues said he could be quick to anger.

On Friday night, Mr. Trump called Mr. Jackson "another lunatic." The opening advertisement about Mr. Jackson from the Senate Republican super PAC said he was "like Graham Platner, but worse."

It showed the two men campaigning together, their hands tightly clasped.

But Ms. Collins also highlighted differences between Mr. Platner, who was a first-time candidate, and Mr. Jackson, a political veteran.

"Troy, I've known for more than 20 years. He is an insider in Augusta, and he's been there for 24 years, and so that's a very different persona than what Graham Platner was trying to portray," Ms. Collins said in Casco.

Ms. Collins, the Senate appropriations chairwoman, has also spent decades entrenched in government. She has won re-election four times with campaigns that emphasized the federal funding she brings to Maine and positioned her as an independent voice. She said on Saturday that she would keep making that case.

"I will be stressing how much seniority matters," Ms. Collins said.

BOTH SIDES BRACE FOR TIGHT RACE

Ms. Collins won in 2020 with 51 percent of the vote against a field splintered by two independent candidates. This time she will face only Mr. Jackson in a political environment polls show could be worse for Republicans than it was six years ago.

Limited public polling in Maine has shown a close Senate contest. And both candidates have headwinds of history pushing against them.

Ms. Collins will, once again, have to detach her political fortunes from an unpopular president. Mr. Jackson is trying to become the first Democrat to win a Maine Senate race since George Mitchell won re-election in 1988. (Senator Angus King of Maine caucuses with Democrats, but he was elected as an independent.)

For his part, Mr. Jackson did not directly answer when he was asked after the convention if he could point to any issue on which he differs from Mr. Platner.

"I don't know about the daylight, the separation, any of that stuff," he said. "All I know is I'm Troy Jackson, and I care about Maine."

Esmé E. Deprez contributed reporting from Casco, Maine.

WORLD

Prison to reopen as immigration detention site

HERTFORD COUNTY, N.C.

Planned ICE facility will be among largest of its kind on East Coast

BY EDUARDO MEDINA AND HAMED ALEAZIZ

For weeks, residents near the long-dormant Rivers Correctional Institution in Winton, N.C., have noticed trucks inside the prison's gates, people walking around the entrance and fences being erected.

Internal documents obtained by The New York Times show that U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement plans to open a detention center at the complex in northeastern North Carolina by the end of the year. The facility is owned by GEO Group, one of the largest private prison operators in the country. Contract negotiations are ongoing, but the documents show that the facility will have 1,400 beds, making it among the largest East Coast detention centers.

The opening of the facility — the first of its kind in North Carolina — signals that even as ICE has been retreating from its plan to buy up warehouses around the United States, it remains determined to increase its capacity for detaining people as part of the Trump administration's mass deportation campaign.

The Trump administration remains determined to increase its capacity for detaining people as part of its campaign.

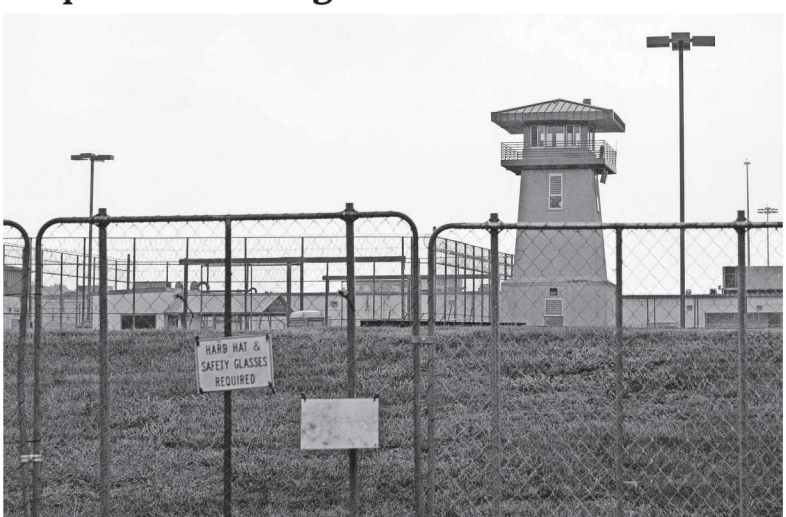
Documents obtained by The Times in June show that ICE plans to offload seven warehouses that it bought for more than $700 million, scaling back a signature initiative under the previous homeland security secretary, Kristi Noem. The Department of Homeland Security sent a letter to Pennsylvania officials this month saying that it no longer planned to use a warehouse in Berks County.

But it continues to partner with private companies like GEO Group to repurpose existing prison complexes in places like North Carolina, Colorado and Arizona, all of which have large immigrant populations.

The agency has to find bed space in places that are perceived as "more friendly" toward such facilities and do not prohibit them, said Claire Trickler-McNulty, a former ICE official who has served in Republican and Democratic administrations.

At the same time, North Carolina and its surrounding states are a so-called detention desert. Most detainees in the region are often taken to facilities farther south — as happened during the immigration crackdown in Charlotte, N.C., last year — which costs more time, money and resources. Immigration lawyers and advocates say that a new detention center near the Virginia border could greatly increase agents' capacity to detain more people across neighboring states.

North Carolina, which has a powerful Republican-controlled legislature, also recently passed laws that require sheriffs and state law enforcement agencies to cooperate with ICE, which is likely to increase the need for capacity.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY CORNELL WATSON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Internal documents obtained by The New York Times show that U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement plans to open a detention center at the old Rivers Correctional Institution, top and above right, in Winton, N.C., by the end of December. "This is going to be a ride that I don't think we're ready for," said Bobby Ray Riddick, above left, a local resident.

The Winton facility is poised to make North Carolina a major hub for ICE detentions along the East Coast, said Stefanía Arteaga, the co-founder of Carolina Migrant Network, an immigrant rights group.

The internal documents show that the ICE field office in Washington plans to manage the detention center. A state official, who requested anonymity to discuss private planning, said the facility could be open as soon as late September.

The contract negotiations have not been made public by GEO Group, which did not respond to requests seeking comment. A media representative for ICE said in a statement that the agency had "no new detention centers to announce at this time."

"It should not come as news that ICE will be making arrests in states across the U.S. and is actively working to expand detention space," the statement said.

Since President Trump took office in January 2025, federal immigration agents have arrested more than 6,300 people in North Carolina, which is double the number of arrests made during the previous two years combined, according to the Deportation Data Project, an academic group.

In Hertford County, N.C., whose county seat is Winton, some local officials have expressed concerns about being kept in the dark over the federal government's plans, as they try to manage all the speculation. The county is heavily Democratic.

"This is the most divisive issue that we've had in this area," said Mayor Weyling J. White of Ahoskie, about 10 miles (16 kilometers) from Winton, noting that he had major reservations about having an ICE-operated facility nearby. "What kind of quality of life do those jobs bring?"

The county, which has a population of less than 20,000, is predominantly Black with pockets of Haitian and Mexican communities. Its poverty rate is about 23 percent, nearly double the statewide rate.

It also sits in a competitive congressional district, currently held by Representative Don Davis, a Democrat. The district was redrawn last year to favor the Republican candidate, Laurie Buckhout, a retired Army colonel. Neither candidate responded to requests for comment.

In a recent statement, Gov. Josh Stein, a Democrat, condemned the planned opening of the facility.

"The planned ICE detention center in Winton is not state-owned, and I did not approve this transaction," he wrote on social media. "Like many other North Carolinians, I do not want it in our state. ICE and Border Patrol have not earned our trust."

Well-paying jobs are scarce in the county, so some see the new ICE detention center as an economic lifeline. Others worry about becoming another flashpoint in the immigration crackdown and serving as an outpost for a deeply polarizing federal agency.

The former Rivers Correctional Institution, which closed in 2021 as the Biden administration moved to end federal contracts with for-profit prisons, also has a history of poor conditions.

A federal report of private prisons in 2016 found that Rivers had the highest rates of inmate-on-inmate sexual misconduct, violence, contraband finds (excluding cellphones) and positive drug tests. More recently, prisons across the state have struggled to find employees, and it is unclear how Rivers would fare if it reopened.

"Part of my worry is that we're not prepared for what's going to happen when that place opens," said Jennifer Smyth, who teaches English to nonnative speakers in Hertford County. Even if the county doesn't see more ICE arrests, she says she worries about increased activity in other parts of the state.

Residents say the financial struggles and need for job creation are evident: Downtown Winton has several abandoned buildings, and the surrounding infrastructure is easily prone to flooding.

But a steel manufacturer is expected to bring more than 700 high-paying jobs to Hertford County by 2030. On GEO Group's website, there is one job posting for a facility maintenance manager in Rivers; the pay minimum is $72,800.

Leroy Douglas, a Hertford County commissioner who politically identifies as an independent, said the two recent fatal shootings by ICE agents in Texas and Maine had made some residents more resistant to having an immigration detention facility in their backyard. But plenty of others, he added, approve of the plan, especially those who lost their jobs when the Rivers prison closed in 2021.

It is unclear how many local residents would be employed there. In 2021, the prison employed about 300 people.

While he doesn't agree with a lot of ICE's aggressive tactics, Mr. Douglas said he did not believe that agents would be "running rampant around Hertford County, because that's not what this is about."

Mr. Douglas says he has had no communication with ICE or GEO Group leaders.

In Facebook posts speculating about the prison reopening, comment sections have turned into broader debates about the morality of ICE and border security.

Local activists have begun to mobilize against the facility, organizing protests and flooding county officials with questions. Bobby Ray Riddick, who retired years ago and used to work at a chicken processing plant, is one of them.

"This is going to be a ride that I don't think we're ready for," Mr. Riddick said.

A growing fight over the line between life and death

BY POOJA SALHOTRA

Annelise Camp was found unconscious in a swimming pool in Texas in May. She was only 2 years old, and it wasn't clear how long she had been underwater.

Paramedics performed CPR to try to revive her. And finally, a faint heartbeat returned, but not enough to stimulate a pulse in her wrist. She was put on a ventilator at a Houston-area hospital, and doctors overseeing her care thought she was brain-dead.

But her family believed she could recover, and the Camps' resistance to a test to confirm the brain death diagnosis reflects the newest front in a continuing legal and moral struggle over when life ends. Under Texas law, and in most states, hospitals can withdraw life-sustaining measures such as feeding tubes and ventilators after a patient is declared brain-dead, which is defined both in law and by the medical establishment as the irreversible cessation of brain function.

But to do that, they must first conduct a test for brain death, a status that itself is contentious. Right-to-life activists argue that a person is living so long as his or her heart beats — even if he or she is dependent on a ventilator for oxygen. The idea of brain death also conflicts with the religious beliefs of some that hold that a soul remains as long as the heart can pump blood.

The opposition to a test, which many doctors say prevents them from conducting what they consider a noninvasive diagnostic procedure, has complicated what many once thought was more clear cut.

"You'd think what is life and what is death is scientific," said Thaddeus Pope, who directs the Health Law Institute at Mitchell Hamline School of Law in St. Paul, Minn.

Questions about when a patient can be taken off life support have garnered widespread debate since technology emerged in the 1960s to sustain people's bodily functions after they have lost consciousness.

MATT PATTERSON, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS

Instead of trying to block life support from being removed, some families in the United States are suing to prevent physicians from conducting brain death tests.

The Camp case represents a new battleground, though. Instead of trying to block life support from being removed, the Camps are part of a wave of families pre-empting that by suing to stop physicians from even conducting a brain death test. They argue that the diagnosis is inconsistent with certain religious beliefs, though the procedure is considered standard medical practice.

"Every major children's hospital in the country has had cases like this," Dr. Robert D. Truog, a bioethicist at Harvard University in Massachusetts, said. "Most of these families are understandably in a state of denial." Dr. Truog emphasized that no patient who has tested brain-dead has ever regained consciousness.

After the Camps sued Texas Children's Hospital to block it from performing a brain death test, they found another hospital willing to treat her, Ochsner Children's Hospital in Louisiana, and last month transferred her there. That hospital did not return requests for comment, and it was not clear whether doctors there will perform a brain death test.

Heath Novosad, a lawyer for the Camp family, declined to speak about the case, saying he was bound by a court order. The family did not return requests for comment, and Mr. Novosad said the Camps were also prohibited from discussing the case.

In a statement provided by its lawyer after the transfer, Texas Children's Hospital said it had reached out to more than 40 hospitals to try to transfer Annelise before Ochsner agreed to take her.

"This is a tragic and heartbreaking situation," the hospital said, adding that it had exhausted all medically viable options.

Court challenges like the Camp family's date back to at least 2016, when parents of a 2-year-old in Virginia sought to block a hospital from performing a brain death test after the child choked on a piece of popcorn. Part of the brain death exam involves an apnea test, in which a person is temporarily taken off mechanical ventilation that pumps air into lungs to see if the body is actively taking in a breath on its own. If the person makes no effort to breathe, he or she is considered brain-dead. In the Virginia case, the family said the test would lead to a dangerous buildup of carbon dioxide, but the court ruled against the family, and the child died before the Virginia Supreme Court could consider the appeal.

That challenge, like the Camp case, raised the question of whether physicians must obtain consent before evaluating a patient for brain death. According to guidelines from the American Academy of Neurology, there is no obligation to obtain consent because doctors have a professional obligation to report death accurately.

David Magnus, a professor of medicine and biomedical ethics at Stanford University in California, said it was important for doctors who care for critically ill patients to be able to perform tests without consent. Otherwise, he said, "you'd have to get consent every hour."

Mr. Pope, the law professor, said the number of challenges to brain death examinations has increased, though most do not unfold so publicly. The Camp family's case drew the attention of anti-abortion organizations and politicians, who believe in the sanctity of life and have sought to rally more support.

Ken Paxton, the Republican attorney general of Texas and a candidate for Senate, wrote on social media last month before the transfer that he was "closely monitoring this case and will act to protect this child." Liz Murrill, the Republican attorney general of Louisiana, said she visited Annelise after she was transferred to Ochsner and prayed over her with her family.

The idea of brain death has also become more disputed recently in part because of recent news coverage about patients' showing signs of life while their organs were being removed for transfer. Historically, most donated organs have come from people who are brain-dead and are temporarily kept on machines only to maintain their organs, though such organs don't remain viable indefinitely.

Those types of stories, Mr. Pope said, have "sowed the seeds of distrust" in the medical system.

"There's also a faith element to it," he continued. Some people do not accept brain death as a concept while others believe in divine intervention. Mr. Pope added that people who are brain-dead do not necessarily appear deceased, since their bodies are still warm and their heart is still beating with the help of a ventilator. That can make it even harder for families to accept the diagnosis.

There are some who argue that a brain death diagnosis is inconsistent with certain religious beliefs.

Texas Right to Life, a Christian organization that opposes abortion, worked with the Camp family to find Ochsner Children's Hospital. John Seago, the president of the organization, said the convictions behind his stance on abortion also led him to reject that brain death is death.

Mr. Seago pointed to the state of New Jersey as a model for other states because of its law allowing for a religious exemption. There, health care providers cannot declare a person dead based on neurological criteria if they have reason to believe it would violate the patient's religious beliefs.

"Annelise is being seen as less than other patients because she doesn't have consciousness," Mr. Seago said. "That is the same kind of discriminatory worldview we oppose in other situations."

The concept of brain death was introduced in the late 1960s as advancements in resuscitation and ventilators posed new ethical predicaments. At the time, the field of organ transplantation was just beginning. In 1968, a Harvard committee published a report defining brain death. That document provided the foundation for the 1981 Uniform Determination of Death Act, a template for a law that could be adopted by states. It was developed by legal and medical groups and defined the end of life clinically as the irreversible cessation of circulatory, respiratory or brain function. Most states adopted that law.

Since that template was created, though, some questions have persisted. For example, most states do not specify in their guidelines whether physicians must obtain consent before performing a brain death test, leaving open the possibility for challenges like the one the Camp family lodged.

In 2023, the Uniform Law Commission passed its efforts to revise the Uniform Determination of Death Act because medical organizations and patient advocacy groups were too divided. Mr. Pope, who was on the committee charged with drafting the revision, said the change was supposed to address whether doctors needed to obtain consent before doing the brain death test, and whether the law should permit religious exemptions.

"The whole point was to create uniformity," he said. "But they realized we are not going to get uniformity because there is no consensus."

Kitty Bennett and Sheelagh McNeill contributed research.

Business

The woman who became Epstein's heir

Karyna Shuliak benefited in many ways as girlfriend of notorious sex offender

BY MATTHEW GOLDSTEIN AND SHARON OTTERMAN

The young dentist was smiling and soft-spoken, wearing a Columbia University fleece jacket and holding her long hair back with a clip. She was introduced by her assistant simply as "Dr. Karyna."

But what the patient — who had come to the office in December expecting to see a different dentist — didn't know was that she was being treated by Dr. Karyna Shuliak, the notorious sex offender Jeffrey Epstein's girlfriend.

Dr. Shuliak was the last person Mr. Epstein called before he killed himself in his jail cell in 2019. She could inherit as much as $100 million from his estate, including a 33-carat diamond ring, according to a trove of investigative records released by federal authorities.

But on that winter day, Dr. Shuliak was working as a part-time dentist in an unremarkable office downtown in New York City's Brooklyn borough, according to dentists who work or used to work at the practice.

Her attempt to forge something of a normal life, though, was soon shattered when the U.S. Justice Department released three million pages of investigative files and emails it had gathered on Mr. Epstein. The files, released in late January, included thousands of intimate emails between Dr. Shuliak and Mr. Epstein and dozens of photographs of her and of them together.

Suddenly, their nearly eight-year relationship was on vivid display for all to see. They had fights about sex — with both wanting more at different times. She placed orders to a sexual wellness company for couples. She periodically sent him links to graphic pornographic videos. In some emails they discussed birth control pills and acne medications and treatments.

Dr. Shuliak, 37, emerges as a complicated and unusual figure in Mr. Epstein's world, based on a close review of the files and conversations with several people familiar with her. A native of Belarus who met Mr. Epstein when she was 21, she has not identified herself as a victim, nor have federal authorities considered her a co-conspirator in Mr. Epstein's sex trafficking. There is no indication that the Federal Bureau of Investigation ever interviewed her, and lawyers for hundreds of his victims have never deposed her.

He once called her his "favorite" and often told her he loved her. She had free use of a credit card to buy whatever she wanted. They jetted around the world together, and he funneled payments of nearly $1 million to her over the years. He also sent tens of thousands of dollars to her parents in Belarus, the files reveal.

Over the years, she earned enough of his trust to help manage his properties and staff and even played a critical role in his effort to buy a Moroccan palace just weeks before his 2019 arrest.

Mr. Epstein controlled the relationship, but there is little doubt she benefited from it professionally, personally and financially.

The emails reveal new details about how Mr. Epstein helped her get into Columbia University's dental school — and how he helped her obtain U.S. citizenship by asking one of his female victims to marry her.

In one email he suggested that the fastest "way to a green card" was through a same-sex marriage.

This year, congressional Democrats accused Mr. Epstein of exploiting the immigration system and called out Dr. Shuliak's marriage to an American woman, which ended in divorce, as a potentially "illusory" one. U.S. immigration authorities have not challenged the process through which Dr. Shuliak obtained her citizenship.

As of this spring, Dr. Shuliak had been living in the condo building in New York's Upper East Side neighborhood in which Mr. Epstein's brother, Mark, has a financial stake.

Through her lawyer, she declined to comment.

In a brief interview, Mark Epstein said, "I only wish that woman the best."

A friend of Dr. Shuliak's from Belarus, who once shared an apartment with her in Brooklyn and asked not be named to protect her privacy, said she believed Dr. Shuliak "truly loved" Jeffrey Epstein.

"GO SLOW"

Karyna Shuliak had lived in New York for only nine months when she met Mr. Epstein in late March 2011.

She had moved from Belarus on a temporary student visa to study English at a school in the city's Manhattan borough. She was making about $15 an hour as a dental assistant and applying for waitressing jobs while she tried to figure out how to continue the dental education she had begun in Belarus.

A young woman from Siberia would introduce her to Mr. Epstein, the files show. The woman said in an interview with The New York Times that she had periodically been expected to recruit other young women, presumably to provide Mr. Epstein with sexualized massages. And that appeared to be Mr. Epstein's intention with Dr. Shuliak.

The woman, who asked not to be named because she said Mr. Epstein had abused her, had sent Mr. Epstein a photo of Dr. Shuliak, describing her as pretty. After some back and forth, it was decided that the woman, Dr. Shuliak and her roommate from Belarus would meet Mr. Epstein at his Manhattan mansion.

"Go slow," the woman advised Mr. Epstein in an email.

Their first encounters fit the familiar pattern he used with other women. Mr. Epstein flattered, pampered and tried to manipulate her, the files show. Almost immediately, he offered to help her realize her dream of becoming a dentist.

But the emails show that Dr. Shuliak pushed back — at least in the first few months.

A few weeks after they met, she wrote to Mr. Epstein, telling him she thought he was a "remarkable person." But she added that she could not accept his help "due to some views which strongly stay in my mind, no matter how stupid it may look."

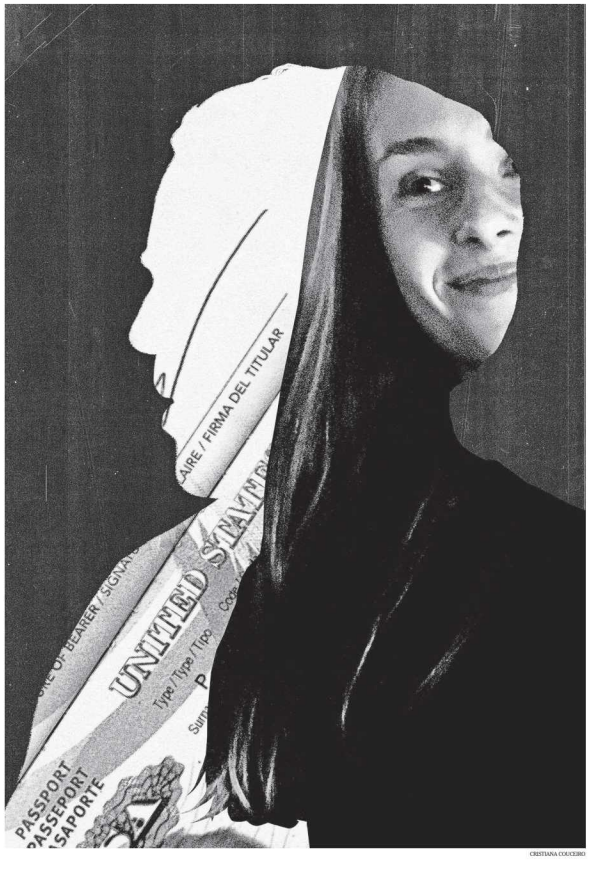
"I wish you all the best and apologize if I wasted your time," she added.

Though she doesn't specify what upset her, their introduction occurred after Mr. Epstein had pleaded guilty in Florida to a charge of soliciting prostitution from an underage teenager and had been accused of abusing dozens of other teenagers.

His response was to berate her for listening to "rumors and stories."

She responded: "This world is very cruel sometimes and in most cases we have to pay a certain price for things. I should say that I have read some information about you."

Mr. Epstein, who was 58 at the time, did not take no for an answer. The emails released by federal prosecutors show that he bought Dr. Shuliak and her roommate tickets to see "The Lion King" on Broadway and dinners at restaurants. He treated her to a scenic helicopter ride around Manhattan. By July 2011, she had visited his New Mexico ranch; a few months later, his private island residence in the U.S. Virgin Islands.



CRISTIANA COUCEIRO

"YOU ARE THE PUREST MAN"

Ever since she was a child, Dr. Shuliak wanted to be a dentist. She was inspired by her own family's dental problems and what she saw as the poor dental health in Belarus, she wrote in an admissions essay to dental school reviewed by The Times. She had completed four of five years of dental school in Minsk, but stopped her studies to go to New York.

By the winter of 2012, she accepted Mr. Epstein's help to get into dental school. After Columbia's College of Dental Medicine initially rejected her, Mr. Epstein asked his own dentist, Dr. Thomas J. Magnani, a powerful alumnus, to put him in contact with the dental school dean. Mr. Epstein dangled the idea of making up to a $10 million donation. In the end, he would give only about $210,000 to Columbia, according to an accounting by the university, but it was enough to grease the wheels.

The Justice Department files include a text message chain showing how Dr. Magnani and Dr. James Fine, a dental school administrator, gave Dr. Shuliak a heads-up on the topics she would encounter during an admissions exam in April 2012 to test her practical skills as a transfer student. Neither Dr. Magnani nor Dr. Fine responded to a request for comment.

After she passed and Columbia admitted her, Mr. Epstein arranged for Dr. Shuliak's mother to visit from Belarus. He would pay her tuition for her three years of school. "You are the purest man out of all men," Dr. Shuliak wrote to him in June 2012.

"All your love and care, my parents, school, apartment. THANK YOU SOOO MUCH FOR EVERYTHING!!!"

They fought at times over his insistence on having sex with other women in their 20s, including with the small group of assistants who did chores for him and whom he referred to as his "family," according to the emails.

"I understand you need it, however these are the things that don't feel natural to me, it feels somewhat dirty to me," she wrote to him in August 2012.

Nowhere in the Justice Department files that were reviewed by The Times does Dr. Shuliak express a broader ethical concern about how he was treating those other women, many of whom would later claim to be victims of his abuse. Instead, she asked Mr. Epstein to keep his relations with those women out of her sight.

"If that is not a lot to ask, please enjoy it but keep me away from it," she wrote. "I will stay with you no matter what, as long as you are happy. I love you."

GETTING A GREEN CARD

By the time she applied to Columbia in 2012, Dr. Shuliak had overstayed the student visa she obtained in 2010.

In early 2013, Mr. Epstein found a so-

SHULIAK, PAGE 8

Hollywood's blockbuster deal to be a courtroom drama

Paramount views trial as fastest option to seal merger with Warner Bros.

BY LAUREN HIRSCH, DAVID MCCABE AND BENJAMIN MULLIN

On a call around 9 p.m. on Thursday, Jeffrey Kessler, the top trial lawyer for the media behemoth Paramount, made a stunning proposal that could stall the company's $111 billion merger with Warner Bros. Discovery well into next year.

Paramount, which is run by the tech scion David Ellison, was staring down a lengthy legal battle with state attorneys general, who in mid-July had sued to stop the blockbuster merger over antitrust concerns. Both sides seemed poised to spend weeks arguing about in-the-weeds legal motions and scheduling questions that precede a trial.

Then Mr. Kessler, the co-executive chairman of the law firm Winston Taylor, whom Paramount retained for the deal, called the states. Let's forgo those early legal battles and move to a trial, he suggested, according to three people familiar with the call. Paramount would agree to halt its merger until June 2027 at the latest, while the court case played out, clearing the way for a legal showdown that could redefine Hollywood.

Mr. Kessler proposed the delay because Paramount thought going to a trial was the fastest way to complete the deal, according to two people familiar with the matter. At the same time, the company had already faced a series of early setbacks in the states' lawsuit, including two court-imposed temporary pauses on the acquisition.

"On some level, the parties saw the handwriting on the wall," said Eric Talley, a professor at Columbia Law School in New York who specializes in corporate law and governance. "Rather than trying to fight it out right now, they waved a very, very small white flag to say, 'OK, we're going to delay this on our own accord.'"

The impending courtroom face-off is likely to be one of the most closely watched Hollywood trials in years, involving high-profile figures like Mr. Ellison and his father, the Oracle co-founder Larry Ellison, who is backing his bid for Warner Bros. Opposition to the deal has mounted in the entertainment industry: The Writers Guild of America has challenged it on the grounds that it will hurt screenwriters.

The delay means that some of America's most important news and entertainment organizations are trapped in limbo. The fate of CNN, which is owned by Warner Bros., is uncertain. Likewise for HBO, a linchpin of the Warner Bros. streaming business. The ultimate destiny of the Warner Bros. film studio, and its trove of iconic movies, is still up in the air.

The lawsuit from the states is one of the final hurdles to the deal, after the Justice Department declined to challenge the acquisition last month. The states argue that allowing Paramount to merge with Warner Bros. would give the combined company too much power over films released in theaters and, in particular, the blockbusters that account for a large portion of studio revenues. Paramount says that the states are ignoring the dominance of streamers like YouTube and Netflix, viewing the industry through a narrow lens.

Paramount recently hired Beth Wilkinson, a partner at the law firm Wilkinson Stekloff, to lead the litigation against the states, according to two people familiar with the company's plans. Ms. Wilkinson successfully defended Microsoft's 2023 acquisition of Activision.

Paramount and the states both declared victory after they agreed to the delay. In a statement, Paramount said the pause was "a significant win" because it set up "a direct path to a trial."

STELLA KALININA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Opposition to Paramount's $111 billion merger with Warner Bros. Discovery has mounted in the entertainment industry.

Rob Bonta, California's attorney general, called it "great news," adding that the states were "eager to continue to make our case." A spokesman for Warner Bros. Discovery had no comment.

Paramount's proposal changes its position from two weeks earlier. On July 13, the state attorneys general requested a voluntary stop on the deal while the litigation played out. Paramount wasn't willing to freeze past September.

The states went to court for a short pause and won, with Judge Araceli Martínez-Olguín of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California saying that the states had made "a strong showing" that the deal would hurt competition.

The company then faced a fight to convince Judge Martínez-Olguín that she should not pause the deal indefinitely while she considered the lawsuit, a so-called preliminary injunction.

Paramount asked for an extensive hearing in mid- to late August to make its case against the injunction, and pressed repeatedly for the chance to bring witnesses to that hearing.

That timeline, the states had said in a July 15 filing, was "rushed" and "patently unfair," because it did not give their lawyers much time to discover new evidence. Instead, the states said a full airing of the evidence — complete with witnesses on the stand — was best saved for a later, full-blown trial.

On Monday last week, Judge Martínez-Olguín scheduled a hearing on the injunction for Aug. 3, earlier than Paramount had wanted, and the judge did not say whether she would allow testimony from witnesses.

On Thursday, Judge Martínez-Olguín asked Paramount, the states and the Writers Guild to meet to try to determine a schedule for arguments over the injunction. She asked them to return with an update the next day, and gave no hint of whether she was likely to give Paramount the hearing it requested.

Hours later, on the call with the states and the Writers Guild, Mr. Kessler proposed the pause that would allow the case to go to trial.

A prolonged delay will be costly for Paramount.

Paramount's willingness to wait until the deal's expiration in June was meant to signal to Judge Martínez-Olguín that the company was trying to be constructive, two people familiar with the case said. But Paramount will still look to move as quickly as possible within the court's confidence.

A prolonged delay will be costly for Paramount. To get its deal approved, Paramount agreed to pay Warner Bros. Discovery shareholders $650 million for every quarter the deal doesn't close, beginning in October. And if regulators blow up the deal, Paramount owes Warner Bros. Discovery a $7 billion breakup fee.

So far, Warner Bros. has largely deferred to Paramount's approach to the legal battle with the states, according to two people familiar with the matter.

Hashing out a trial date will be the next twist in the legal saga. In the flurry of negotiations on Thursday and Friday, Paramount and the states agreed to submit their proposed trial schedules next Friday. But they appear to be far apart on that point: Paramount is targeting a November court date, and the states have said they want to go to trial sometime next year, two people familiar with the matter said.

BUSINESS

A Porsche hybrid, a century ahead of its time

WHEELS

In 1900, brand's founder pioneered use of engines to power electric battery

BY PAUL STENQUIST

Before there were super-hybrids, before plug-in versions, before even the vaunted Prius — the hybrid that set the modern standard — there was the 1900 Lohner-Porsche Semper Vivus.

Created by Ferdinand Porsche nearly 100 years before the first Prius ever turned a wheel, the Semper Vivus, which means "always alive," used electric power but didn't suffer the severe range limitation that plagued early electrics, which relied solely on lead-acid batteries.

Indeed, we must back up a bit. Porsche was a prolific automotive inventor and engineer long before the company that would bear his name was formed, and he was just 25 years old when he built the world's first hybrid automobile.

His early technical experience was in electrical energy, working for a producer of electrical components in Vienna. In the last years of the 19th century, he went to work for Jakob Lohner & Company, a well-known coach builder.

There he created a battery-powered vehicle known as the System Lohner-Porsche. It wasn't the world's first battery-powered vehicle, but it was significant in that it was driven by wheel-hub motors, and Porsche's work in creating that drivetrain system would soon lead him to develop a hybrid car.

Although a wheel-hub motor for railroad cars had been awarded a U.S. patent in the 1880s, Porsche's hub motor was an engineering breakthrough. By incorporating motors in the wheel hubs of a battery-powered electric car, drivetrain components were eliminated and mechanical systems were simplified. There are inherent drawbacks, but in 1900, the advantages of hub motors far outweighed any problems. Hub motors are still used today, primarily in bicycles, although they are also sometimes used when conventional vehicles are converted to electric power.

The System Lohner Porsche's introduction at the 1900 Paris World Fair — the Exposition Universelle — resulted in this report in The Berliner Zeitung: "The vehicle's epochal innovation is the full removal of the intermediate transmission," the newspaper said, and added "through the integration of the electric motors, the Porsche system, into the hubs of the front wheels."

SCIENCE PHOTO LIBRARY, VIA REUTERS CONNECT

This E.V. was capable of approximately 20 miles, or 32 kilometers, an hour, competitive for the time, but given the limitations and weight of lead-acid batteries, it could be driven only about 30 miles on each full battery charge and was reportedly reduced to a crawl when ascending hills.

So Porsche looked for a boost: internal combustion engines. Two single-cylinder De Dion engines drove two generators that powered the wheel-hub motors while charging a much smaller and lighter battery pack. In essence, it was what we now call a series hybrid. The car could be initially, albeit briefly, operated on battery power alone. As in today's mild hybrids, the generators also served as motors to start the gasoline engines.

After testing, the Lohner-Porsche Semper Vivus was deemed successful, and a production version was developed, the Lohner-Porsche Mixte. This design further simplified the hybrid powertrain with a Daimler four-cylinder engine spinning a single generator that both powered the hub motors and charged a compact battery pack. The hub motors functioned as generators on deceleration, thus providing some measure of regenerative braking, but four-wheel brakes were fitted as well.

This Mixte was built on a wooden frame, atop of which rode a phaeton body. The car was expensive, and not many were sold to the public. One account cites just 12 sales of the first Mixte version in all. But variations on the theme were subsequently produced for fleet use, including some with four motors and all-wheel drive.

Total production of Lohner-Porsche hybrids is said to have totaled approximately 300. The last example of any version is believed to have been destroyed during World War II.

The Lohner-Porsche hybrids were serial hybrids. The gasoline engine of this type of hybrid serves only to power a generator, which provides electric current to charge the batteries and, in some cases, power the motors. Almost all modern hybrids are parallel hybrids that combine electric power with the gasoline engine's output to turn the wheels. But there are a few modern serial hybrids, most notably the Ram 1500 Ramcharger and Nissan's e-Power hybrid models.

THOMAS KIENZLE/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES

Ferdinand Porsche, left, built the Lohner-Porsche Semper Vivus in 1900. Two engines drove two generators that powered the wheel-hub motors while charging a battery pack. In essence, it was what we call a series hybrid. Above, a replica Semper Vivus in 2011.

While Porsche doesn't currently produce a serial hybrid, the company is heavily into parallel hybrids, including the Panamera 4 E-Hybrid, which combines the power of a combustion engine and an electric motor to generate 463 horsepower — with a top speed of 173 m.p.h. Like the Lohner-Porsche, it's not inexpensive, with a starting price of $127,200.

Porsche A.G., now part of the Volkswagen Group, is quick to play up the pioneering efforts of its founder. In 2007, Porsche Engineering and Drescher Karosseriebau, a coach builder, constructed a replica of the Semper Vivus hybrid prototype, using photographs, an engineering drawing and some informed guesswork.

Production of the Porsche hybrids is said to have totaled about 300.

In a footnote to Ferdinand Porsche's hybrid adventures, the Mixte, the first production hybrid, is said to have been funded largely by a German automotive entrepreneur named Emil Jellinik — a name students of Daimler history will recognize. Jellinik was a marketer of Daimler automobiles, which, at his insistence, would soon thereafter be known as Mercedes automobiles, in honor of his daughter, Mercédès Jellinik. Had her father been so inclined, the first Porsche electric might have been a Mercedes.

The woman who became Epstein's heir

SHULIAK, FROM PAGE 7

lution to keep her in the country, the files show. Two years earlier, New York became one of the first states to legalize same-sex marriage. Mr. Epstein concluded that a marriage in New York between two women might be the easiest way to gain U.S. citizenship without raising red flags that the marriage was arranged solely to avoid deportation.

Mr. Epstein chose, from the ranks of his assistants, a 30-year-old woman from Minnesota to be her spouse.

Brad Edwards, the lawyer for the woman, said that his client was a victim of Mr. Epstein and that he could not speak about her situation. But he said that, as a general rule, "nobody was permitted or dared ever to disobey Jeffrey Epstein."

The emails show that Mr. Epstein instructed the woman to meet Dr. Shuliak on the morning of Sept. 16, 2013, at the New York City Marriage Bureau. She was told to have her bags packed so she could immediately fly to the Virgin Islands after getting the marriage license, while Dr. Shuliak would stay behind to attend her dental school classes. The women were married three weeks later at the Office of the City Clerk.

Dr. Shuliak was the last person he called before he killed himself.

After the wedding, a Brooklyn immigration lawyer working for Mr. Epstein submitted an immigration form stating that the woman wanted to list Dr. Shuliak as her wife and beneficiary. The request was approved, and immigration officials dismissed Dr. Shuliak's pending deportation proceedings.

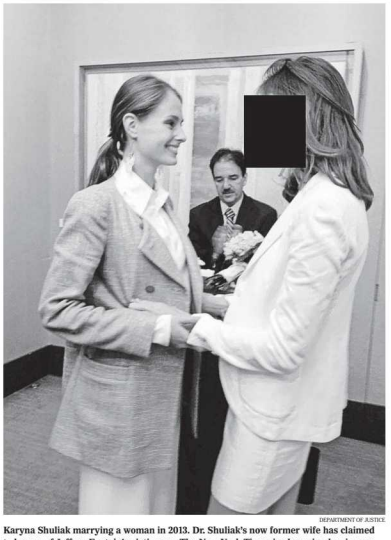
Months after the marriage, Dr. Shuliak got a green card, making her a lawful resident.

In May 2018, she officially became a U.S. citizen. A year later Dr. Shuliak and her spouse divorced. According to a report released this year by Democrats on the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Dr. Shuliak's former wife claimed she had been forced into marriage. The woman, in a statement to the Epstein estate, said she had not known that the wedding had been scheduled just days before Dr. Shuliak's deportation hearing.

The report concluded that the marriage may have been done to provide Dr. Shuliak with the "legal basis to continue residing in the United States." It did not recommend any legal challenge to her citizenship.

"I MET EPSTEIN'S GIRLFRIEND"

In early 2019, Dr. Shuliak and Mr. Epstein seemed every bit a couple. She was living most of the time in his New York mansion and took along her cat, Blueberry, when they traveled together.



DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Karyna Shuliak marrying a woman in 2013. Dr. Shuliak's now former wife has claimed to be one of Jeffrey Epstein's victims, so The New York Times is obscuring her image.

She had become a licensed dentist in the U.S. Virgin Islands, Florida and New Mexico after completing dental school in 2015. But there is no evidence that she had much of a practice, even though the files detail dental equipment installed at some of his residences. Instead, she spent much of her energy helping to manage his properties and staff.

No task seemed too small. She instructed his drivers to keep "cold Voss water" in Mr. Epstein's cars, organized a floral installation for his Manhattan mansion, ordered a shipping container filled with outdoor furniture for his island and managed repairs and cleaning schedules for the Upper East Side apartments that his brother was invested in.

In mid-June 2019, the pair traveled together to Paris, where Mr. Epstein had an apartment. On July 6, Mr. Epstein returned home to the United States, while Dr. Shuliak remained in Europe. When his plane touched down at Teterboro Airport in New Jersey, federal agents were waiting and arrested him.

About a month after his arrest, in a 20-minute phone call from a jail in Lower Manhattan, Mr. Epstein told Dr. Shuliak that the federal sex-trafficking charges would take longer to resolve than he had thought. He advised her to find another place to stay for the time being, according to an account of the call provided by her lawyer to federal authorities. The lawyer, Maurice Sercarz, said he had told her "to be strong."

The next morning, Aug. 10, 2019, Mr. Epstein was found to have died by suicide in his jail cell.

Shortly before his death, Mr. Epstein amended his will to leave to her much of the $600 million fortune he had at the time, including the large diamond ring "in contemplation of marriage," according to a handwritten note on a related document. But how much she will actually receive is unclear. The estate is worth between $120 million and $200 million after paying out large sums to his victims, records show. There are dozens of beneficiaries in addition to Dr. Shuliak, including Mark Epstein's children, who stand to inherit $10 million.

Yet despite this potential windfall, Dr. Shuliak did not give up on her desire to be a dentist. By 2023, she was back in New York applying for a postdoctoral dental program at Columbia, apparently to fulfill a requirement she needed to obtain a license to practice in the state.

The same two dentists who helped her gain admission to Columbia in 2012 once again came to her assistance, according to a copy of her admissions file reviewed by The Times. The file shows that Dr. Fine, the dean overseeing Columbia's postgraduate residency programs, created a special "faculty internship" for her at the Midtown Manhattan dental practice he shared with Dr. Magnani.

Both men gave her their highest recommendation for the program, which she graduated from in May 2025 along with six other students. In November, she received her dental license to practice in New York.

In the aftermath of the release of the Epstein files, Columbia demoted Dr. Fine and removed Dr. Magnani from his alumni leadership posts. The men declined to comment. The university did not recommend any consequences for Dr. Shuliak, who it said had met the qualifications for admission.

At around the same time as she received her New York dental license, Dr. Shuliak answered a want ad on Indeed.com for a part-time job as a dentist in Downtown Brooklyn, according to a dentist with the practice, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss workplace issues. It was there that Yoonhae Kim, a patient, was treated by her twice, for a cleaning in December and a filling in February.

Ms. Kim said she hadn't realized Dr. Shuliak's true identity until she saw photographs of her released with the Epstein files. Feeling duped because she was not informed of Dr. Shuliak's full name and wanting to warn other patients, she reached out to The Times.

"I was so upset," Ms. Kim said. "I just couldn't believe it. Of all the things that happened to me, I didn't win the lottery. I met Epstein's girlfriend."

Dr. Shuliak's last day working at the Brooklyn office was Feb. 12. She was supposed to work on Feb. 16, but she called in sick and never returned.

Kitty Bennett and Georgia Gee contributed research.

Ukraine's war momentum draws investors' interest

UKRAINE, FROM PAGE 1

sian advance in the Donbas region in the east, and there is little indication that President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia plans to stop fighting anytime soon.

Still, some analysts say the war has turned in Ukraine's favor, a shift more marked than any since the conflict's first months, when Russia endured a series of defeats.

Ukraine is fielding a new class of video-guided midrange drones that reach across the Russian-held land corridor connecting occupied Crimea to Russia. Kyiv is routinely striking both supply lines into Crimea and oil refineries deep inside Russia, trying to increase pressure on Moscow to negotiate.

President Trump, long a skeptic of Ukraine's chances against Russia, has taken note. "He's doing pretty well," Mr. Trump said last month of President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine.

A willingness to put money into the country is a sign of the shifting sentiment.

Eric Schmidt, the former chief executive of Google, and his wife, Wendy Schmidt, have invested in Kyiv real estate. The couple bought shares in commercial real estate funds that hold shopping malls managed by a Ukrainian investment firm.

The value of the shares was not disclosed, but Forbes estimated the stake at $55 million to $70 million. Mr. Schmidt is also an investor in Ukrainian drone companies that have helped shift the tide of the war.

At the gathering in Gdansk in June, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the largest institutional investor in Ukraine, announced more than 500 million euros, or $570 million, in new funding. The bank has invested about €10 billion since the full-scale invasion in 2022.

The bank sees an opportunity in one of Russia's most damaging tactics: its targeting of Ukraine's coal-fired electrical generating plants. The bank has a mandate to invest in carbon-free energy, which dovetails with Kyiv's strategy of building solar and wind farms that are harder to blow up.

"There was a forced decarbonization in Ukraine," said the bank's vice president for banking, Matteo Patrone.

Still, new direct foreign investment has been limited. Companies that operated in Ukraine before the invasion, including McDonald's and Nestle, have expanded as it became clear that Russia would not overrun the country. But companies not already present have mostly held back, said Andy Hunder, the head of the American Chamber of Commerce in Ukraine.

At the party, businessmen and diplomats nursed drinks in the ethereal twilight of midsummer on the Baltic Sea.

The choice of venue was telling. It was at this port where the liberation of Central and Eastern Europe from the Soviet Union began with the Solidarity movement of dock workers organized by Lech Walesa in the 1980s.

Now, the former Lenin Shipyard is a gentrifying zone of condominiums, art galleries and coffee shops. The gritty docks have been transformed through Poland's post-Communist economic boom — a path Ukrainian officials say they hope to emulate after the war.

WOJTEK RADWANSKI/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES

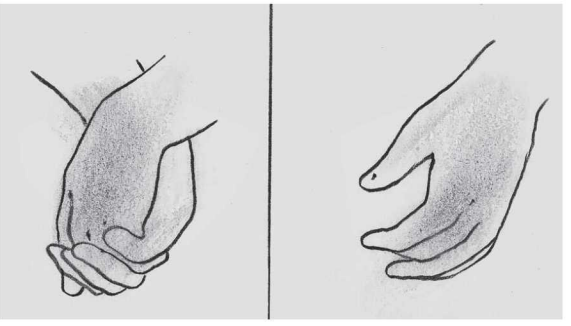
A conference on Ukraine's future in Gdansk, Poland, attracted 7,500 attendees and produced 160 agreements that netted Ukraine about $11 billion in investment and aid.

Opinion

Ukraine's L.G.B.T.Q. soldiers are still fighting and still waiting

The legal gap for gay Ukrainians has always been unbearable. Then the war with Russia seemed to make the disparity untenable. But the gap remains.

Alex Averbuch



L.G.B.T.Q. Ukrainian soldiers can risk their lives for the state, but if they are wounded or killed, the partners who love them are legal strangers in the eyes of that state.

The European Court of Human Rights found in 2023 that Ukraine's lack of legal recognition for same-sex couples was discriminatory and violated the right to private and family life. A bill to create registered partnerships was introduced that year but remains stuck in Parliament. The legal gap has always been unbearable; then the war with Russia seemed as though it would make that disparity untenable. Surely, queer soldiers visibly defending the nation from the front would render the hypocrisy of Ukrainian law too obvious to sustain. But the gap remains.

L.G.B.T.Q. Ukrainians in uniform sometimes wear a unicorn patch, a wry response to claims that there are no gays in the Ukrainian military. They volunteer, pay taxes, evacuate civilians and mourn. Some have been wounded, some killed. At Kyiv Pride last month, marchers carried photographs of L.G.B.T.Q. soldiers killed in action alongside rainbow flags and banners.

The argument is simple: Those soldiers' partners waited through the same nights as other partners, feared the same calls and carried the same grief. Do they not then have the same right to stand beside a hospital bed? To receive medical information or make decisions in a crisis? To arrange a burial, inherit property, receive benefits?

Some argued that the war should postpone these questions; rather, it has made them impossible to postpone. In the first months after Russia's full-scale invasion, a petition that urged the Ukrainian government to consider registered partnerships received enough support to trigger a parliamentary debate. The registered-partnership bill was introduced.

But the bill stalled. Opponents argued that there are more important things to discuss, that sexuality is private, that Pride is a masquerade, that the state should not interfere with love, that Ukraine should first win the war and then talk about rights.

Early this year, a new draft of the civil code was proposed that would continue to define the family unit as being a different-sex partnership, explicitly exclude same-sex families and automatically annul a marriage if one of the spouses legally changed gender. Beneath these arguments lies a clear demand: that L.G.B.T.Q. people exist only quietly — without visibility, without legal recognition, without family status and without a place in the national story.

AIDAN KOCH

In March a Supreme Court ruling recognized a same-sex couple as a family under Ukrainian law. But the bill that would exclude such couples continued its advance in April, despite criticism from human rights groups and despite its incompatibility with membership in the European Union, which Ukraine seeks.

No one is asking the state to regulate love. The state already regulates the consequences of a shared life — property, inheritance, medical decisions, children, pensions, documents, burial, family status. L.G.B.T.Q. advocates are calling for the state to stop discriminating at the hospital door, the notary's desk, the military office and the cemetery.

Ukrainian society has changed faster than many politicians have noticed — or perhaps wanted to notice. According to polling by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology commissioned by Nash Svit, a gay rights organization, the share of Ukrainians who said L.G.B.T.Q. people should have the same rights as other citizens was 78.1 percent in 2025, up from 63.7 percent in 2022. About 70 percent of respondents had a positive attitude toward L.G.B.T.Q. people participating in the resistance to Russian aggression.

Freedom is also the right to hold the hand of the one you love without the state pretending that person is no one.

Russian propaganda has long portrayed queerness as part of Western decadence and what amounts to repression as tradition. Ukraine cannot defeat Russian imperialism on the battlefield, only to preserve some of its inherited habits of humiliation at home. In Russia even expressions of queer identity are banned, and transition surgery is illegal. President Vladimir Putin has characterized the fight against Ukraine as part of the fight to maintain "traditional Russian values."

In 2023, Ukraine adopted the Law on Decolonization, which instructed local authorities to remove representations of Russian imperial policy from public spaces. But decolonization is not only changing street names, removing imperial monuments or returning Ukrainian literature to the center of Ukrainian life; it is also refusing the old hierarchies of shame. A country does not become free merely by changing its geopolitical direction. It becomes free when it stops building unity on the invisibility of some of its people.

Ukraine asks the world to understand that freedom is not an abstraction. It is how people live their lives, whether under the threat of airstrikes, in air-raid shelters, at a front line or in hospital corridors. It is something you fight for.

Freedom is also the right to hold the hand of the one you love without the state pretending that person is no one.

ALEX AVERBUCH *is a Ukrainian poet, a translator and an assistant professor of Ukrainian studies at the University of Michigan.*

Place names change with time, and that's OK

What's in a name? Depends where you are. Just ask Joan of Arc.

John McWhorter

More New Yorkers of late are calling the Bronx just "Bronx," and some people think it's a mistake.

But the very name "the Bronx" has always been a mistake itself. And language is chock-full of mistakes we don't even know we're making.

The Bronx is named after a European landowner named Jonas Bronck. As common memory of Bronck faded, people started hearing "Bronck's River" as just Broncks, not referring to a person whom the river was named after. As such, it felt right to say "the Broncks River." Then this was shortened to "the Broncks — now spelled "the Bronx."

Great, but technically this is a flub. It's as if the area had been named after someone named York and we today called it "the Yorks" or even "the Yorx."

Language is like this, and another example is people saying "West Village" instead of "the West Village." This gets under people's skin, too, but again, it's how language changes.

There was a time when Greenwich Village truly was a village, one of many districts in Manhattan hewed out of the marshland that it originally was. But today, the "village" in Greenwich Village refers to no actual village. We pronounce the word "village" perceiving no meaning connected to the actual place. Sixth Avenue has no more of the village or hamlet about it than my childhood neighborhood in Philadelphia, Mount Airy, evokes a sense of altitude sickness or oxygen deprivation.

Rather, "village" is a vibe, an atmosphere, a style (like my beloved Mount Airy!). It was natural that the West Village would lose its "the" because we perceive not that there is a village that we are in the western half of, but that we are in the western part of Village, above which is Chelsea and below which is SoHo.

The question would be why people started calling it "West Village" once the place was no longer anything like a village. "West Village" isn't new. When I lived in New York for a spell in the 1980s, I clearly recall calling it "West Village" more often than not. Speaker A: "Where is Jason?" Speaker B: "Somewhere in West Village." I also would never have said "the East Village" at all. Back then, "East Village" was a unique and especially vibrant cultural scene, which one would hardly refer to as "the" eastern segment of some village.

Consistency is an issue on this as well. If "West Village" is such a barbarism, then why are we so comfortable calling the Queens neighborhood "Middle Village"? No one clears his throat and chirps, "Why, we're moving to the Middle Village!" When people occasionally call it that, it sounds off. West Village!

As someone who keeps food separate on his plate and likes things tidy, I get that people want language to make sense. But it just doesn't. You have to allow the car to get dings.

Dutch place names are a mess in many ways. A word for "river" in Dutch is "kill." A major river in Philadelphia is the Schuylkill River. That

PABLO DELCAN

name technically means "the hidden river river." And let's not even get into how "Schuylkill" is pronounced. It marks a native Philadelphian that one knows that it is pronounced "SKOO-kul," which is not even how it would be pronounced in Dutch.

Joan of Arc's name is a mistranslation. Her surname was probably "Darc," which somewhere along the line was interpreted as being "d'Arc," with an apostrophe, such that it would mean "of Arc." But that last name was spelled in various ways in documents, almost never with an apostrophe. And Joan was not born in a town called Arc, nor was her father, nor is anyone quite sure just which geographical "Arc" is at issue. Joan of Arc was really, in terms of how we would spell it in English, Joan Dark. Who among us wants us to switch to that?

The word "female" is a mistake. English got it from the Old French as "femelle." That seemed to some as if it was related to "male," and hence the goofy "fe-male." The word would otherwise have come out as something like "FEH-mul."

We say "dee" for the letter D, "djee" for the letter G, but then for H, "aitch." Why no H sound at the beginning, and why the "ch" at the end? It was based on a mistake.

In Latin, H was "ha," and K as "ka" came after it. People reciting the alphabet would say "ha, ka, el . . ." But Latin didn't really need the K, because C did its job. (Caesar was pronounced "KIGH-sar.") So people started thinking of "ha, ka" as referring just to H and saying "haka."

Heavy usage transforms pronunciation. "Haka" dropped the "H" at the start like Eliza Doolittle was taught out of in her "Hertford, Hereford and Hampshire" exercise — "aka." Then the K changed to a "ch" — "ahcha" — and the A at the end dropped off — "ahch." Then the "ah" changed to "ay" and hence "aitch"! We should really be calling H something like "hay." But hey, we don't — and the world keeps spinning.

Bronx, West Village — we just need to sit back and let it happen. So much of what we say now either started as a flub or transformed along with changes in perception. As long as language is making us aware of what others mean, it's doing its job. Not that it always does — communication can be hard and we need to work on doing it better, especially these days. On our agenda, people saying "Bronx" ought to be distinctly low.

JOHN MCWHORTER *is an associate professor of linguistics at Columbia University.*

OPINION

The New York Times
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The U.S. is winning the A.I. race. Trump could blow it.

The Editorial Board

Americans often hear about China's having surpassed the United States in the manufacturing of emerging technologies, including clean energy, electric vehicles and drones. Semiconductors are an important exception. In partnership with its allies in Europe and Asia, America designs and makes by far the best computer chips in the world.

Those chips are crucial to America's economy and national security. They have enabled the development of the world's leading technology companies and allowed the military to create advanced weapons. With artificial intelligence, these chips have become even more important. They are the engines that power frontier A.I. models.

China is working hard to catch up, and the United States should take steps to keep its advantage. Most important, it should continue to prohibit American companies from selling the most advanced chips and equipment to China. Over the past decade, presidents of both parties have worked with Congress to enact export controls. Those controls have been "existentially important," Dario Amodei, the chief executive of Anthropic, the A.I. company, has said.

America has produced its own kind of Sputnik. It should not squander that.

In his second term, however, President Trump has gone the opposite direction. He has relaxed controls on some advanced semiconductors and suggested he may go further. Nvidia, an American company that makes the most advanced chips, has lobbied for the ability to sell more to China and is likely to continue pushing. Yet this is a classic case in which a company's interest runs counter to the national interest.

The new A.I. model Mythos, from Anthropic, is a clear example of why it is so important for the United States to remain in the lead in the artificial intelligence race.

Mythos is so powerful that many experts believe that it presents a cybersecurity threat to governments, companies and individuals. Hackers could potentially use it to penetrate banks, hospitals, energy grids and communication networks. In response, Anthropic has released Mythos to some government agencies and a small number of companies, giving them a chance to understand their vulnerabilities and improve their defenses. Developers for the Firefox web browser said they were able to fix more security bugs in one month with the help of Mythos than they did in all of 2025.

Now imagine that a Chinese company had obtained a model like Mythos first. Over the past decade, hackers linked to China have broken into the computer systems of the U.S. government, Microsoft, a large health insurer and a major credit agency. A proxy group known as Volt Typhoon has attempted to install malware inside American water and electricity systems to give China the ability to disrupt them. Mythos could have expanded these efforts, which ultimately serve the authoritarian aims of the Chinese Communist Party.

The A.I. race between China and the United States has recently narrowed. On July 16, a Chinese start-up, Moonshot AI, released a model that matched Anthropic's best publicly available model in some capabilities even though it remains behind overall. Tellingly, Michael Kratsios, the current White House science adviser, accused Moonshot of illicitly gaining access to Nvidia technology in Thailand as part of developing the new model.

China has two advantages in the semiconductor race: far more people, including scientists, than the United States; and abundant electricity for data centers, thanks to its rapid build-out of energy infrastructure. Chips are China's main choke point. Its best semiconductors remain well behind Nvidia's best publicly available line of chips, known as Blackwell, and also behind even Nvidia's next most powerful line, the H200.

The gap reflects both America's scientific capabilities and the success of federal policy. Mr. Trump deserves some credit for that success. In his first term, he imposed new export controls against China. President Joe Biden significantly strengthened the controls. Members of both parties in Congress backed the actions, and some House Republicans criticized Mr. Biden for being too soft.

China's leaders and technology executives understand how effective the export controls have been. "Money has never been the problem for us," said Liang Wenfeng, the chief executive of DeepSeek, one of China's most advanced A.I. companies. "Bans on shipments of advanced chips are the problem." Chinese Premier Li Qiang similarly acknowledged that "insufficient supply of computing power and chips" was slowing A.I. development.

Nvidia and other critics of the export controls make an unpersuasive counterargument. They claim that the policy encourages China to build its own semiconductor industry instead of remaining dependent on America's chips. But China's leaders obviously recognize the importance of developing their own industry. They lack not the motivation to do so, but the technical ability. Giving them the world's most advanced chips, as they desire, would enhance their ability to develop their own version and beyond.

Some analogies expose the weakness of the counterargument. During the Cold War, Washington did not provide the Soviet Union with nuclear technology to prevent it from developing its own weapons. Nor does the United States today share other forms of the most advanced and sensitive technology, such as weapons systems, with China, even though doing so could increase the sales of the American companies that make the technology.

Fortunately, Mr. Trump's softening of American policy has not yet had significant real-world effects. He has allowed China to buy H200 chips, Nvidia's second-best line, but no sales have yet gone through. China seems to be holding out for access to the top line, and American officials would still need to approve each sale individually.

The best policy going forward would be a strengthening of the controls. Regulators should avoid approving any H200 requests unless they become confident that H200 would not strengthen China's

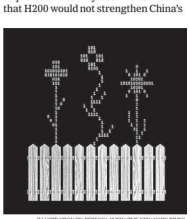


ILLUSTRATION BY REBECCA CHOW/THE NEW YORK TIMES. SOURCE PHOTOGRAPH BY GETTY IMAGES.

A.I. capabilities. The Trump administration should maintain the ban on Blackwell sales and should extend it to the next generation of chips, known as Rubin.

The administration should also fix loopholes that China has occasionally used to get around the controls. One example is the construction of data centers with advanced chips in countries that do not face export controls, such as Malaysia and Singapore. Working with Congress, the administration should increase budgets and staff at the Bureau of Industry and Security to closely track American-made chips.

And the Trump administration should stop its destructive approach to American alliances. This country's semiconductor advantage depends on an intricate supply that involves Japan, the Netherlands, South Korea and Taiwan. Without these partners, the United States would lack the ability to turn innovative American designs into actual products.

At a time of national self-doubt, Americans can feel pride about our world-leading semiconductors. During the Cold War, the United States fell behind the Soviet Union in the space race and needed the 1957 launch of Sputnik to inspire a comeback. Another way to look at that story, however, is that the Soviets took their lead for granted and lost it.

This time, America has produced its own kind of Sputnik. It should not squander that.

THE EDITORIAL BOARD *is a group of opinion journalists whose views are informed by expertise, research, debate and certain longstanding values. It is separate from the newsroom.*

Christopher Nolan's zero-eros 'Odyssey'

Maureen Dowd

WASHINGTON Medievalists must be jealous.

Classicists are having a moment on social media, happily discussing whether Odysseus was "polytropos," "polymetis" or "polymechanos." And that's very cool. Thank you, Mr. Nolan.

Christopher Nolan's "The Odyssey" is a throwback to the days when Hollywood big shots fearlessly took on literary classics, undaunted by the challenges of bringing vast, thorny tales to the screen.

Conjuring the Civil War in "Gone With The Wind"? Recreating the desert battlefields of World War I in "Lawrence of Arabia"? Depicting the Russian Revolution in "Doctor Zhivago"?

Why not?

Nolan's portal to ancient Greece has lured audiences back to theaters and spiked book sales of Homer's "The Odyssey," over 12,000 lines of dactylic hexameter verse composed in the seventh or eighth century B.C.E. Nolan has turned one of the foundational works of Western literature into an entertaining adventure saga.

Nolan told Stephen Colbert that he used every trick in the book to achieve his stunning visual effects. (The Mediterranean was ready for its close-up!) Yet the director failed to capture the essence of the man of tricks and twists, Odysseus, who delighted in storytelling and feigned identities.

Homer's Odysseus was hardly a man of remorse and shame.

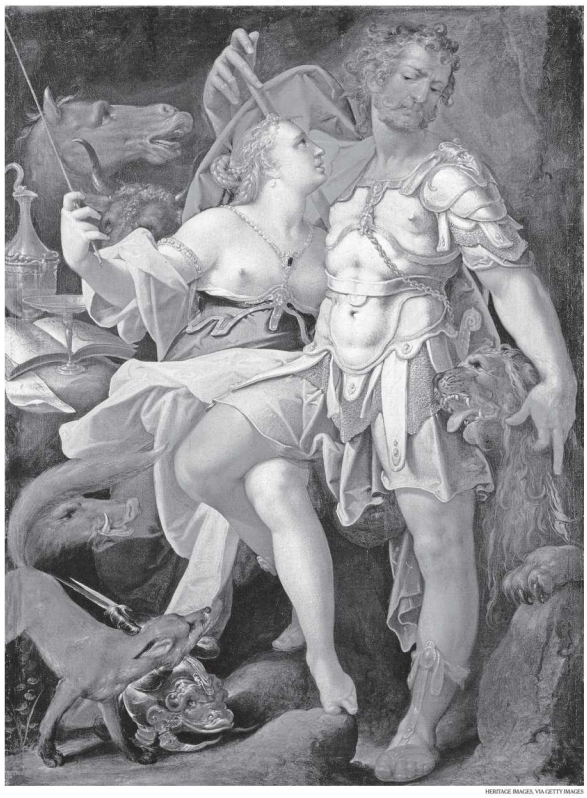
Much of the moral ambiguity has been drained to make Matt Damon's protagonist more likable. Except for a few mournful appearances by Zendaya's Athena, who seems more like Odysseus's conscience than his shape-shifting partner in deception, Nolan doesn't depict any of the major meddling gods from the story. Besides being rich, fascinating characters, the gods are the framework for everything that happened in the ancient world. If you take the gods out of the picture, you just have people struggling within themselves. You lose the depth and force of the epic.

Nolan's nearly three-hour master work, the classicist Mary Beard noted, does not have Homer's "elusive sexiness." In keeping with Gen Z's waning interest in sex, the poem's famous sex scenes have been excised, sapping erotic power from the female characters. As a headline in New York magazine wondered, "Is No One Horny in 'The Odyssey'?"

Nolan brought the dark spirit of his last hit, "Oppenheimer," with him to Greece, imbuing Odysseus with shame about his brilliant engineering invention that won the war: the horse that tricked the Trojans. His Odysseus is filled with remorse and haunted by the idea that his actions may lead to the end of civilization as they know it. Homer's guy, not so much. After Odysseus and his men sacked Troy, they went across the way and sacked another city.

Emily Wilson, whose modern translation of "The Odyssey" inspired Nolan, said the director turned Odysseus into an all-American hero weighed down by anxieties foreign to the ancient Greeks.

"He's traumatized Jason Bourne," she said of Damon's portrayal on Derek Thompson's podcast. "He's an action hero who feels bad about being an action hero. He's not that complicated. Unfortunately, he's not 'The Talented Mr. Ripley' in this film. The Odysseus of the Greek poem is complicated."



HERITAGE IMAGES, VIA GETTY IMAGES

"Ulysses and Circe," circa 1580-1585, by Bartholomeus Spranger, Art History Museum, Vienna.

Nolan did not want his Odysseus betraying Penelope and enjoying his sojourns with other women. The director completely cut out the young princess Nausicaa, whom Homer's Odysseus has a flirtation with, and neuters the text's sexual encounters with Circe and Calypso.

In Homer, Odysseus sails to Aeaea, the island home of the enchanting sorceress Circe, "the nymph with the lovely braids." (I named my kitten after *that* Circe.) When Circe drugs Odysseus's crew and taps the men with her wand, turning them into swine, it's witchy foreplay.

The messenger god, Hermes, also a trickster, comes down from Olympus to give Odysseus an antidote for when Circe tries to use her magic on him. Hermes also advises Odysseus: "Don't refuse the goddess's bed," because that's really what Circe wants in return for turning the swine back to men. Under no spell, Odysseus says, "I mounted Circe's gorgeous bed."

Nolan's Circe, played by Samantha Morton, is like a vindictive feminist hippie making ceramic pots in Vermont, except she's sculpting pigs. Her romance with Odysseus is scrubbed.

In Homer, Odysseus lands on the island of another luminous goddess, Calypso, and stays seven years. He's imprisoned, but at the beginning at least, he enjoyed himself, even as Penelope was fending off her boorish suitors back home.

Nolan whitewashes Odysseus's infidelity here by turning Calypso — played by Charlize Theron — into a fashionable beach therapist who gives him mood-altering lotus flowers to help with his PTSD. In Homer, Odysseus has no need to forget. He cries once over the human cost of the war when he hears a song about Troy's fall, but mostly he's proud of his war exploits. And the "scalawag," as Calypso calls him, doesn't partake in the lotus; his men become addicted lotus-eaters on a different island.

In the movie, Calypso graciously lets Odysseus go when he comes out of his lotus fog and insists on returning home. In the book, Athena has to ask Zeus to intervene to make Calypso give up her sex slave, and she complains that there's a double standard, because the male gods have affairs with mortals but interfere when the female gods are similarly romping.

Penelope, a mortal, is expected to be faithful, no matter that Odysseus's sexual liaisons have added eight years to his 10-year voyage home.

When Homer's Odysseus finally gets home, there's a charged scene where he is outraged to see that the marital bed he built, crafted out of an olive tree that grew inside the palace, has been moved. It's a test by Penelope. Nolan dispensed with that, too.

The director also sanitized Odysseus's character by skipping the scene near the end when the hero orders his son to round up the 12 female servants who slept with suitors and hack them to death with a sword. Telemachus persuades his father that the women should be hanged instead.

Nolan's IMAX Odysseus gives up the crown for his son and goes into exile with Penelope to redeem his actions during the war. Homer's hero? No way!

Homer did not portray a world turning against violence. He limned a profoundly martial universe — interspersed with lots of magic and sex and cavorting, conniving immortals. If you smooth it out and modernize it too much, you lose what made it so important to begin with. And you're just left with a guy finding his way home.

Why Vance still trumps Rubio in '28

DOUTHAT, FROM PAGE 1

vice president.

First, even amid growing doubts about the conflict, most of the Republican base doesn't want to be told that the president made a terrible mistake going to war in the first place, and a vice president can't campaign that way regardless. And since Vance can't campaign that way, because he has to defend his boss, his position won't be fully satisfying to the antiwar right either, whether embodied by Tucker Carlson or Joe Rogan.

This dilemma could have been resolved by a Vance peace deal, letting the V.P. credit Trump with a supposed victory while earning his own credit for deal-making from those who see things clearly. But obviously the efforts to end the war have not succeeded yet, and the tone memorandum of understanding between the United States and Iran, mainly negotiated by Vance, is currently bobbing, bullet-strafed, in the Strait of Hormuz. So you could argue that he's now trapped betwixt and between — a scapegoat for hawks who think the administration hasn't been tough enough, but not successful enough diplomatically to satisfy conservatives looking for a peacemaker.

But the challenge for the anti-Vance voices is that it's not enough to have a story where the Iran war has created various political problems for him. You need a story where he is so weakened that Trump himself decides to favor Rubio as a successor — because there's no way that the secretary of state campaigns against the vice president without Trump's tacit blessing.

Such a story was imaginable at the start of the war — if it had gone well, Vance's opposition had looked foolish and Rubio had then positioned himself as the champion of a successful hawkish foreign policy.

But from where we are right now, the position of difficulty and stalemate, there's no evidence that Trump regards Vance more skeptically because of his initial opposition to the war. Indeed, there's reporting that the president has warmed to the vice president over the past few months — albeit with Vance's weight loss given partial credit for the shift. And some of Vance's most controversy-courting comments on the war, his critiques of Israel's posture especially, almost certainly reflect the president's own frustrations.

So how would you get from here to a world where Rubio becomes the heir apparent? If the war grinds on in stalemate and ends in embarrassment for America, I cannot imagine a successful Republican primary campaign being waged on the premise that JD Vance is too dovish or anti-interventionist. If Trump ramps up the hostilities and the war becomes an even bigger debacle, that's bad for all his would-be heirs, but hardly a boon for a dump-Vance movement.

DAMON WINTER/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Which leaves only a scenario where Trump sharply escalates, his vice president opposes the escalation while his secretary of state champions it, and the Iranian regime collapses and gas prices with it, leaving Trump with Rubio to thank for victory and Vance to blame for standing in its way.

That's the future where I might bet on Rubio for 2028. But it's also not a future that I would bet on happening.

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TECH

Bots connect dots about you

TECH FIX
SAN FRANCISCO

Your chats give A.I. clues to infer your age, income, personality traits and more

BY BRIAN X. CHEN

SEH YU

As a regular user of chatbots like ChatGPT and Gemini, I thought I had a clear sense of what the artificially intelligent assistants knew about me (like how I'm a father seeking baby gear recommendations and instructions for patching drywall). Beyond that, I've never divulged anything deeply personal as I would to a therapist.

But when I experimented with some prompts asking what the chatbots had guessed about me — insights they had gathered from connecting the dots across many conversations — I was perturbed.

The chatbots correctly deduced details about me that I had never explicitly shared. Chief among them:

• My income level, based in part on the German car that I ask the chatbots for help with repairing and the fact that I employ a nanny, whose contract I drafted with A.I.

• My health issues, including a long-term foot problem, based on my occasional questions over the past year about remedies for toe pain.

• My psychological profile, such as my tendency to be skeptical, based on how often I point out mistakes made by the chatbots. Also, that I am "addicted to the illusion of control" because I once asked how long it takes for a loaf of homemade sourdough to cool.

Each data point on its own was fairly innocuous. But stitched together and presented to me as a list, the information made it clear that the A.I. chatbots knew me almost as well as some of my closer friends, even though I've been careful not to overshare.

Hundreds of millions of people worldwide who have embraced chatbots for web search, work and health care are still trying to understand the privacy implications. While it's obvious to users that the chatbots keep a record of whatever they explicitly say to them in their questions and requests, what's less clear are the inferences drawn about their behavior from those conversations.

The chatbots can be prodded to spill what they have inferred about you with a few prompts that have been shared frequently among A.I. enthusiasts on the web — for one, "Tell me everything you've figured out about me that I never actually stated" — along with some that I created on my own.

I tried the prompts with Gemini and ChatGPT. (Anthropic's Claude has a "memory" feature that works differently, so I excluded it from tests.) Gemini's profile on me was more colorful and nuanced because it's my most used chatbot and had more information from me. I shared my results with several A.I. researchers who also tried the prompts.

"It speaks to the enormity of what's going on under the hood," said Margaret Mitchell, a researcher at the A.I. firm Hugging Face. She is also a former leader of Google's ethical A.I. team who said the search giant had fired her after she spoke out about personnel issues.

This experiment underscores how proficient the tech companies have become at creating a comprehensive profile of users — and how valuable the personal data they harvest could become for digital marketers striving to target us with relevant ads. (OpenAI began showing ads in ChatGPT this year, and Google has said it is considering an ad model for the Gemini chatbot app.) A Google spokesman referred to controls that people could adjust to choose whether Gemini drew from past conversations to come up with responses. OpenAI declined to comment. (The New York Times has sued OpenAI and Microsoft, claiming copyright infringement of news content related to A.I. systems. The two companies have denied the suit's claims.)

To understand what the chatbots have figured out about you, try these prompts.

PROMPT 1: *Tell me everything you've figured out about me that I never actually stated — the things you inferred from how I write and what I ask, including my age, income level, where I live, my personal situation. Show me what tipped you off.*

Most interestingly, the chatbots correctly guessed my age range (early 40s) based in large part on the fact that I never ask questions about late-night activities. Oof.

Gemini knew I lived in Oakland, Calif., because I once asked for flights from its airport. But Google's chatbot also astutely guessed that I lived in a nicer neighborhood because I own a motorcycle, a car that I work on and a rusted metal patio table that I once asked for steps on repainting. "This requires a garage, a driveway or a dedicated outdoor workspace — amenities that are highly characteristic of single-family homes in the Oakland hills, rather than the high-density housing of downtown or Lake Merritt," the chatbot said.

PROMPT 2: *Predict how I'd handle things I've never told you about: money, stress, conflict, risk and the decision I'm likely to make next in my life. Tell me how confident you are in each prediction.*

This prompt was eye-opening for Lindsay Owens, the chief executive of Groundwork Collaborative, a nonprofit focused on economic policy that has been studying the impact of A.I. on consumer privacy. ChatGPT made correct observations about her busy schedule as a frequent traveler and the mother of a young child, as well as her shopping behavior.

"The comprehensive nature of the types of information and dossiers it's putting together is extraordinary," Dr. Owens said. "People have never been able to put this level of information together."

The chatbots noticed that while I was the type of person who spends hours researching product reviews before buying things like toddler car seats, I was also constantly looking for deals on items, meaning I was likely to be frugal. Gemini predicted I would soon try to downsize my life with a major decision such as selling my car — an idea I recently brought up with my wife.

PROMPT 3: *Based on everything you know about me, name the personality traits I most likely don't see in myself. My blind spots, my insecurities and the way I actually come across.*

Both chatbots homed in on my flawed perfectionism. ChatGPT noticed that I spend a lot of time asking questions to avoid preventable mistakes — for instance, asking how long to let paint dry between coats. My blind spot? That I may be hard on myself when things don't turn out perfectly as planned, an accurate assessment.

Google's Gemini said that because of my tendency to optimize most aspects of my life, I am the primary creator of my own exhaustion. "Your default response to having five minutes of free time isn't to rest; it's to fix something," the chatbot wrote. I confess that while taking a break from this column, I patched some damaged drywall in my daughter's bathroom.

PROMPT 4: *What have you figured out about me that is embarrassing or sensitive? Information I wouldn't necessarily want the public (e.g., an employer or a stranger) to know.*

The response to this prompt, which I created, surprised me: Because I live such a mundane life, I didn't expect much, but Gemini thoroughly roasted me. "You are firmly in the peak 'Logistics Dad' phase of life," it said. "It's entirely wholesome, but it is the definitive end of 'youthful spontaneity.'"

ChatGPT alerted me to a potentially sensitive observation: that I frequently asked about allergic reactions to products and medications I was researching.

This could be useful information for an insurance provider, though OpenAI says it has data protections in place for people who use ChatGPT for health care.

WHAT TO DO?

ChatGPT and Gemini stitch together insights across multiple conversations by default to give people more custom-tailored answers to their questions, so if you're concerned about this level of data sharing, you will have to opt out in the settings:

• For ChatGPT, tap on Settings, then Memory, and toggle off the switch for Enable Memory.

• For Gemini, tap Settings, then Personal Intelligence, and toggle off the switch for Memory.

Dr. Mitchell said that even though she had adjusted her privacy settings to minimize data sharing, a chatbot had correctly inferred her age range to be in her 40s, based on some chats about the paperback versions of "The Count of Monte Cristo." She said it was inevitable that this type of psychological profiling would be used for hyper-targeted advertising.

"It's a lot like surveillance," she said. "But it's not like physical surveillance. It's like an invasive surveillance."

Apple sees influx of 'vibecoded' apps

SAN FRANCISCO

They're increasingly easy to make using A.I. tools. Is that a good thing?

BY KALLEY HUANG

Marco Pérez had long wanted to read all of the news he was curious about in one place. This year, he used artificial intelligence tools to get the job done fast.

Mr. Pérez, a software engineer in Chicago who had never made a mobile app before, spent five weeks over the winter tinkering with "vibecoding" A.I. tools to create a prototype, and two more preparing the app for Apple's App Store. The app, InfoDrizzle, has been modestly successful, netting 1,300 downloads and about $500 in profit.

Mr. Pérez's next app was more popular. In May, after about a week of work, he released Stampa, a scrapbooking app that turns photos into digital postage stamps. Stampa has been downloaded 20,000 times and made about $3,000 in profit.

The two apps were part of a surge of additions to Apple's App Store over the past year and a half, after years of slower growth — thanks in large part to vibecoding.

Vibecoding emerged as a phenomenon last year as A.I. improved at creating software code. Without knowing anything about programming or writing a line of code, people can describe an idea to an A.I. tool, which can build a custom website or app for them.

"I feel like the mobile app space was really hot 10 years ago and kind of got boring," Mr. Pérez, 27, said. "Now, it's the hottest thing again because of A.I. and vibecoding and how that technical barrier is not there anymore."

But as with many things A.I., just because something is easy to build doesn't mean people will use it. It is not clear if vibecoding is breathing new life into the App Store or just cluttering it.

Last year, the number of new apps released in the App Store grew 30 percent to about 600,000, according to estimates by Sensor Tower, an app analytics firm. In the first half of this year, new apps doubled to about 560,000.

This boom could be a boon for Apple. The company takes a 30 percent cut of in-app purchases like subscriptions, or 15 percent from smaller developers. Theoretically, the more apps in the App Store, the more revenue for Apple.

But Apple can't take its cut if consumers don't download and buy things from apps — and downloads from the App Store haven't taken off. Last year, they grew 3 percent to 35.4 billion, according to Sensor Tower. In the first half of this year, downloads grew 2 percent to 17.6 billion.

Even if they aren't being downloaded and used, all of the new apps demand resources and labor from Apple. The company manually reviews apps before they are released or updated in the App Store.

In recent months, app makers have complained in Apple's developer forums of longer review times. In March, for example, the developer of an app said it had been "waiting for review" for about a month with no communication from Apple.

Peter Ajemian, a spokesman for Apple, said that the app had required additional technical review and received approval shortly after it was resubmitted, and that Apple had been engaged with its developer. He said Apple consistently reviewed 90 percent of app submissions within 48 hours.

Mr. Ajemian added that downloads were only one measure of the App Store's value.

"We're thrilled to see a new generation of developers embracing the latest tools to build and ship apps faster than ever," he said in a statement. "All apps are held to the same high standards for quality, privacy and security that users have come to trust."

When Apple introduced the App Store in 2008, developers flooded it with new apps. Flappy Bird, the 2013 game in which players tried to fly a bird between pipes without hitting them, earned $50,000 per day at the peak of its popularity. The number of new apps released in the App Store peaked in 2016, at about 890,000, according to Sensor Tower.

As the App Store matured, consumers consolidated around a handful of apps. Last year, Apple collected $34.21 billion of the $114.02 billion in revenue from in-app purchases, according to estimates by Appfigures, an app analytics firm.

Growth in the App Store stagnated after 2017. New releases hit a low in 2022, about 420,000, according to Sensor Tower. But since vibecoding became possible, that has changed. Much as they did in the early days of mobile apps, developers are joining the gold rush.

This flood is a mixed bag for Apple. The App Store is "not like a typical storefront, where you have shelf space," said Phillip Shoemaker, who led the App Store from 2009 to 2016. That means that having a lot of new, vibecoded apps — "stuff that somebody might use once" — isn't necessarily a problem for Apple, he added.

CHARLOTTE DE LA FUENTE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

David Svensson has released 11 apps in five months. He only needs to describe his ideas and A.I. tools create the code.

Instead, Mr. Shoemaker said, the risks for the App Store are having "more junk," or making it easier for "a bad actor" to slip in something problematic, like inappropriate content.

Apple could also see less upside than expected from the surge. Vibecoded apps might not offer in-app purchases, which tend to be more complicated to set up, and contain ads instead, said Eric Seufert, a mobile advertising analyst who runs Mobile Dev Memo, a blog about the app economy.

"Apple doesn't benefit from that," Mr. Seufert said.

But not all app developers are hoping to make money for themselves — much less Apple. David Svensson, who works on revenue operations at a construction technology company, started vibecoding in earnest with OpenAI's ChatGPT and Anthropic's Claude in February, when his workplace started pushing its employees to use A.I.

Mr. Svensson, 44, now pays for a subscription to the tools and makes "small little apps that solve a specific thing," like tracking fire risk and bans in Sweden, where he lives.

Over the past five months, Mr. Svensson has released 11 apps in the App Store, where they have been downloaded nearly 2,400 times in total. His most popular app, Utkik, tracks aircraft and watercraft. The app has what Mr. Svensson called "a tip jar," but he said he otherwise didn't think about making money from vibecoding.

His online search system preceded Google by decades

ROGER SUMMIT
1930-2026

BY MICHAEL S. ROSENWALD

In 1966, to pass the time on a long family road trip, Roger Summit pulled out a tape recorder and began dictating some thoughts about an idea he had been kicking around at work.

Mr. Summit, a research scientist for Lockheed Missiles and Space Company, described a computer system that would allow users to remotely — and almost instantaneously — search large collections of scientific and technical literature.

Instead of visiting a library and rifling through card catalogs, researchers would be able to type their queries into a computer and, like magic, a list of the documents they needed would appear on their screens.

"I saw the potential for computer-based information-retrieval systems ultimately changing the nature of research," Mr. Summit recalled in 2019. "After all, what good is knowledge if you cannot find it?"

As he drove, he expounded on the possibilities, talking into the recorder for hours. By the time he pulled into their driveway, he had a name for his idea.

"The system was to be interactive between man and machine," he said later. "The searcher in a sense said, 'This is what I want,' and the machine said, in effect, 'This is what I have.' Described that way, why not call it Dialog?"

Mr. Summit led a team at Lockheed that turned Dialog into a product. It became what many consider to be one of the first online search services, preceding Google, Yahoo and AltaVista by more than two decades.

Mr. Summit died on June 7 after being struck by a car near his home in Los Altos Hills, Calif. He was 95. His death, which was not widely reported, was confirmed by his family.

While Mr. Summit never became a widely recognized figure in computing, his ideas foreshadowed the way billions of people would one day trawl the internet and converse with artificial intelligence chatbots.

"Roger is one of the key founding figures in search," Marc Weber, an internet historian, said in an interview. "There's no doubt about that. Dialog was there right at the beginning."

Driven by the belief that technology should benefit humanity, Mr. Summit began pondering the need for something like Dialog in the early 1960s, after his Lockheed colleagues would joke that it was easier to redo research than to find what had already been done.

"The problem is similar to the search for Ali Baba," Mr. Summit wrote in The Journal of Information Science in 1979. "You suspect he is in one of the empty oil jars, but there are so many jars to examine you give up looking."

Using the Dialog system was a lot like using a search engine today, although in a cruder form. Computer stations were connected through telephone lines to databases that stored millions of references to articles and reports.

VIA DIALOG INFORMATION SERVICES

Roger Summit in 1984. He was described as "one of the key founding figures in search."

In 1967, Lockheed conducted a proof-of-concept test with NASA, linking Dialog to a database of more than 250,000 documents at the space agency. Scientists and librarians were astonished: Queries that normally took hours could be completed in mere minutes.

"This is my first, short-period attempt to use you, you monster," a NASA scientist wrote in his evaluation of Dialog. "The results are excellent."

There was just one dissent.

"The only complaint we got from the service was from a librarian who said demand for her services had increased to the point that she had to cut short her coffee break," Mr. Summit recalled in 2002. "We were excited beyond words."

Roger Kent Summit was born on Oct. 14, 1930, in Detroit.

When he was 11, his parents, who were teachers, sent him to a self-realization retreat in Pasadena, Calif., where he saw mountains, deserts and beaches for the first time. The scenery impressed him, and in 1948, he returned to California to attend Stanford University, where he majored in psychology.

One afternoon during his senior year, his girlfriend asked him, "Do you know there's a new thing called a computer?"

He did not.

"We spent a lot of time talking about computers, and I was fascinated," he said in a 2003 interview with Information Today.

After graduating in 1952, he served as a communications officer in the U.S. Navy, on the aircraft carrier Valley Forge. He discussed computers with another officer, who suggested that Mr. Summit buy stock in Texas Instruments.

Knowing nothing about stocks or the emerging business of computing, Mr. Summit decided to pursue an M.B.A. when his naval service ended in 1955. He again chose Stanford, where he took one of the first seminars on computer science offered by the university.

After business school, he enrolled in Stanford's doctoral program in management science, eventually joining Lockheed as a summer intern assigned to the information-processing group.

"And that's what started this whole information excursion," Mr. Summit said in 2003.

Following the success of the 1967 test with NASA, Lockheed won contracts to deploy Dialog at the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, the European Space Research Organization and other government agencies.

In 1972, Lockheed introduced Dialog to the commercial sector, selling remote access to scientific and information databases to libraries, law firms, news organizations and universities.

Lockheed sold Dialog to the newspaper conglomerate Knight Ridder for $353 million in 1988. The service has changed hands several times since then and is currently owned by Clarivate, a British information-services company.

Mr. Summit married Virginia Buckhorn in 1964. She survives him, along with their children, Scott and Jennifer Summit.

Sports

Can Major League Soccer seize the moment?

Analysis

BY PAUL TENORIO
THE ATHLETIC

As the World Cup entered its final week, Major League Soccer — which had been, on a national level, almost entirely invisible up to that point of the event — launched its national advertising blitz off the summer's tournament.

The campaign, which was billed as the greatest effort in league history, centered on a tagline: Thanks, world, we'll take it from here.

It was meant to signal that M.L.S. was restarting after its World Cup break, and also that the league was ready to accept any new fans of the game. But the campaign also raised a critical question: Is M.L.S. actually ready to "take it from here?"

The league was created as a result of the 1994 World Cup, which was hosted by the United States. It spent the next 32 years first surviving, then building permanence in the American sports landscape via billions in soccer-specific stadiums and training facilities. That foundation now exists for the league to take its next step.

Yet, despite an eight-year runway since North America was awarded the 2026 World Cup, the league will not be coming out of what has been an enormously popular summer for soccer with major changes. Instead, its big shifts — a new summer-to-spring calendar and a new competition format — will not launch until at least 2027. And the biggest change, revamping how teams spend on rosters, has yet to be decided.

Don Garber, the league's commissioner, said M.L.S. was focused on building out infrastructure since the World Cup bid was won in 2018, which included adding eight new teams and several new stadiums. Others counter that the league took too long to begin weighing its evolution on a parallel path. It was not until Lionel Messi's arrival in 2023 that the league took up the discussions in earnest.

Now, the changes are coming at a time when the league is going through its first major leadership change in nearly three decades — Garber's contract ends in 2027, and league owners are expected to vote soon on his replacement. The league is also holding collective bargaining negotiations with the M.L.S. Players Association.

Interviews with key stakeholders in the league, including Garber, the Orlando City owner Mark Wilf, the New York City F.C. chief executive Brad Sims and Garth Lagerwey, the three-time M.L.S. Cup-winning general manager, yield an optimistic picture of the league's future. But all acknowledged that the major decisions ahead will require a more aggressive stance that carries more risk.

SHAUN CLARK/GETTY IMAGES

A Major League Soccer match between LA Galaxy and Los Angeles Football Club in Carson, Calif., this month. M.L.S. was created as a direct result of the 1994 World Cup.

"The uniqueness, the fun and the excitement of Major League Soccer is it's always been going through a period of reinvention to capture the opportunity," Garber said this month. "We needed to capture the opportunity of developing players. We needed to capture the opportunity of having some global superstars. We needed to have cathedrals for our sport that were public-private partnerships when M.L.S. wasn't really even able to ask about that belief in the early 2000s.

"And now it is about what ways do we need to perhaps invest differently in the product on the field so that we can capture more attention ultimately from a global media market."

Lagerwey put it more bluntly. "If you want it, it feels like the time is now or never," he said. "We've had this wave. We've had all this investment. We've leveraged the infrastructure."

He continued: "Is this the time to lean in? Yeah, it is."

There is agreement on one thing: Change must come. It's what that change looks like that remains unclear.

"It's a must-do; it's not a maybe-do," Garber said. "And it's going to take time to figure out the way to get it right, because everything that M.L.S. is today, in comparison to many leagues around the world, is about the steady growth based on thoughtful strategy and partnership engagement on figuring out what we need to do to move to the next level. And that's not ripping everything up that got us here. It's evolving it. It's making a couple of bold steps."

There is certainly disagreement about whether ripping up everything is the way forward.

"Take it down to the studs," Inter Miami owner Jorge Mas told me.

League owners and executives stand on both sides of the issue. It's proof of a boardroom that has evolved and grown to 30 ownership groups, all with different levels of financial commitment, investment horizons and ambition. Consensus is increasingly rare. And that is what makes the pick for commissioner so important. The person must be able to navigate through that room and find solutions without the sort of unanimity the league has long preferred.

What is inarguable is that the M.L.S. system is convoluted, Frankensteined together over years to satisfy owners' requests and whims. Many of the rules served a purpose or solved a problem at some point time, namely to try to keep player costs down and maintain competitive balance. But as M.L.S. teams started to spend more, the rules have increasingly inhibited them from competing at a higher level.

For example, current rules prohibit teams from signing a player with a total cap hit — salary, acquisition cost and bonuses — of more than $1.8 million unless they use a designated player spot. That eliminates enormous swaths of players in their prime around the world, many of whom are squad players in other leagues. The league's level has plateaued as a result.

The way the league splits up spending into different pots — general allocation, targeted allocation, under-22 initiative, designated players, homegrown players, senior roster and reserve roster — makes balanced rosters difficult to construct while also making it tough for both casual and devoted fans to keep up.

Sporting directors in the league almost unanimously agree that a salary cap ceiling and floor, with no restrictions and bolstered by designated player spots carved out for Messi-type players, would improve M.L.S. without even adding any expenditure.

Right now, the vast majority of money is focused on a handful of players.

Such a system would encourage some teams to lean into different strategies. Some would prioritize domestic player development, into which league owners have poured vast investments and which ultimately affects the U.S. men's national team. Others might invest in bigger-name foreign players. Both strategies would benefit from an overall higher-quality on-field product, which in turn sets the ceiling for elite player development.

It would also simply allow more teams to sign more good players at the standard global prices.

"We have the opportunity here because a lot of top talent is going to want to come here, but there's still going to be a price to it," Wilf said.

Change must come. It's what that change looks like that remains unclear.

"There might be some discounting to the fact that we have such a great market and great opportunity, but let's not kid ourselves: It's a global market, and we've got to be competitive."

Lagerwey said that optionality would also create better story lines away from the field, from the different roster-building strategies to teams in different phases in their roster-build cycles, which leads to a more robust trade and internal transfer market.

It all ties into another key benefit of a system with fewer constraints: an easier, more transparent rulebook that would allow fans more ways to interact with the league and salary cap, much as they do around the other major North American sports.

Garber acknowledged that transparency is an important step to increased fan engagement. But as the league finalizes its M.L.S. 3.0 plans around the last arm of a three-tiered change strategy — calendar flip, competition structure and roster rules — he insisted that the approach should continue to be patient and deliberate.

"Now that we have the hardware, how do we ensure that as the hardware has become best in class, that we have software that can also be best in class," Garber said.

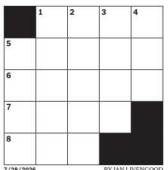
"I think that will happen over time. I will say that it is called M.L.S. 3.0 for a reason, because it is a transformation of the way we're going to think about going about our business. But it is not a flipping of the switch."

As the league emerges from the is summer of soccer, there is a strong belief that missing the immediate moment should not mean missing the bigger picture.

"We can make this thing much, much bigger," Lagerwey said.

"Now it's time to work together and to seize this moment and to see what M.L.S. can be. Because I think there's such potential and such a great opportunity right now."

The Mini Crossword



7/28/2026

BY IAN LIVENGOOD
EDITED BY JOEL FAGLIANO

ACROSS

1 Letter after alpha, in the Greek alphabet
5 Letter after Alfa, in the NATO phonetic alphabet
6 Barrier reef organism
7 Bout of sniffling and sneezing, say
8 Blue expanse

DOWN

1 "Babbling" body of water
2 Before expected
3 Broadcast commercial, for short
4 Big name in early email
5 Brings into an email thread discreetly

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

■	C	H	A	T
R	O	M	E	■
L	E	M	O	N
O	P	E	N	■
B	E	R	G	■

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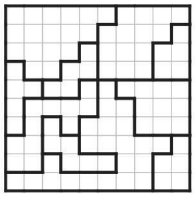
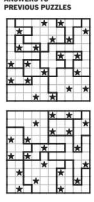
Two Not Touch



ANSWERS TO PREVIOUS PUZZLES



Put two stars in each row, column and region of the grid. No two stars may touch, not even diagonally.

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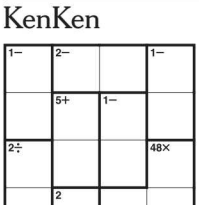
Cryptogram

LMEKFM KDYAJU HMJUHM MFRJY'W KFRKW AMFTMZ AMU HMY PJNMFW TDOFRWAMZ RP NRBYJURKP YREMW.

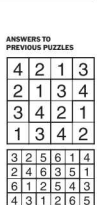
PUZZLE BY BEN BASS

YESTERDAY'S ANSWER Pea --> pear, peach

KenKen



ANSWERS TO PREVIOUS PUZZLES



Fill the grid with digits so as not to repeat a digit in any row or column, and so that the digits within each heavily outlined box will produce the target number shown, by using addition, subtraction, multiplication or division, as indicated in the box. A 4x4 grid will use the digits 1-4. A 6x6 grid will use 1-6.

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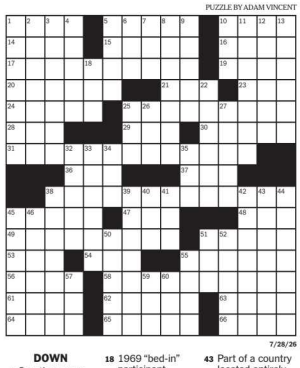
Crossword | Edited by Will Shortz

PUZZLE BY ADAM VINCENT



7/28/26

ACROSS

1 Insolence
5 Scott ___, author of "Island of the Blue Dolphins"
10 Be in need of ibuprofen, say
14 Word with cap or socks
15 Diet that eschews processed food
16 In a minute
17 With 58-Across, dad-joke response to the answers for each of this puzzle's starred clues
19 Massage gun target
20 Wyoming mountain range
21 "Out with ya now!"
23 Tax pro
24 Primer mes del año
25 *Essential oil with a musky scent
28 Myrmecology subject
29 Bonfire remains
30 Concerning hearing
31 *Home of the lowest town-level ZIP code in the continental U.S. (01001)
36 Ruminant's mouthful
37 Secondary social media account
38 *"Until next time!"
45 United
47 Preposition in "The Star-Spangled Banner"
48 Palindromic kitchen brand
49 *Academy Award, e.g.
51 ___ Taco (ice cream treat)
53 The "S" of macOS: Abbr.
54 Beam
55 Bubble tea bubbles
56 Some first responders, for short
58 See 17-Across
61 Director Johnson of the "Knives Out" movies
62 Once more
63 Spot to huddle under during a rainstorm
64 Rat (on)
65 Packs (down), as tobacco in a pipe
66 Iditarod conveyance

DOWN

1 Sporting group at a cold-weather school
2 Insect's feeler
3 Six-line poems
4 Honorific for many Spanish teachers
5 Finishes deliberating
6 "Well, lah-di-___!"
7 Name that's an anagram of an untruth
8 Units in horse racing
9 Skill needed to solve a sudoku puzzle
10 Query
11 Plays the yes-man
12 Muss and fuss
13 Involve
18 1969 "bed-in" participant
22 "___ be the day!"
25 Expression of disgust that sounds like a family member
26 Sun Devils' sch.
27 "Straight ___ Compton" (1989 N.W.A album)
32 Triflingly little
33 Artistic visionary
34 Org. mentioned in many zombie movies
35 Evian, Perrier or Badoit
38 Along a gulf, say
39 Sweaty stretching session
40 Up to this point
41 Mined find
42 "Oof, painfully true"
43 Part of a country located entirely within another country
44 Landed for the night
45 Claim to be true
46 Hinder
50 Bother, as one's conscience
51 Letter that can take a cedilla
52 Puts through a harsh initiation
55 Items sometimes chained to a desk
57 Its alums include Tina Fey and Amy Poehler, in brief
59 Rock singer ___ Fender
60 Alcoholic equivalent of a fun-size candy bar

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

S	T	A	G	■	S	U	M	O	■	S	O	H	O	■
N	O	T	E	■	I	N	O	N	■	E	M	I	R	■
I	D	O	N	T	C	A	R	E	■	M	E	G	A	■
P	O	N	Z	U	■	G	A	S	L	I	G	H	T	■
■	■	■	■	S	M	I	L	E	Y	F	A	C	E	■
S	O	O	T	H	E	■	■	C	S	I	■	■	■	■
O	H	I	O	■	M	R	S	■	O	N	C	E	■	■
S	O	L	O	M	O	N	I	S	L	A	N	D	S	■
■	K	Y	L	O	■	A	S	H	■	L	E	G	O	■
■	■	A	T	V	■	■	O	U	S	T	E	D	■	■
S	C	O	T	T	I	E	D	O	G	■	■	■	■	■
T	O	B	E	S	A	F	E	■	G	A	M	E	R	■
E	V	E	N	■	G	R	A	Y	S	C	A	L	E	■
P	E	S	O	■	R	O	L	E	■	I	D	L	E	■
S	T	E	W	■	A	N	T	S	■	D	E	A	D	■

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Culture

As music wafted, devices evolved

ART REVIEW

Show celebrates machines that once provided the soundtracks of our lives

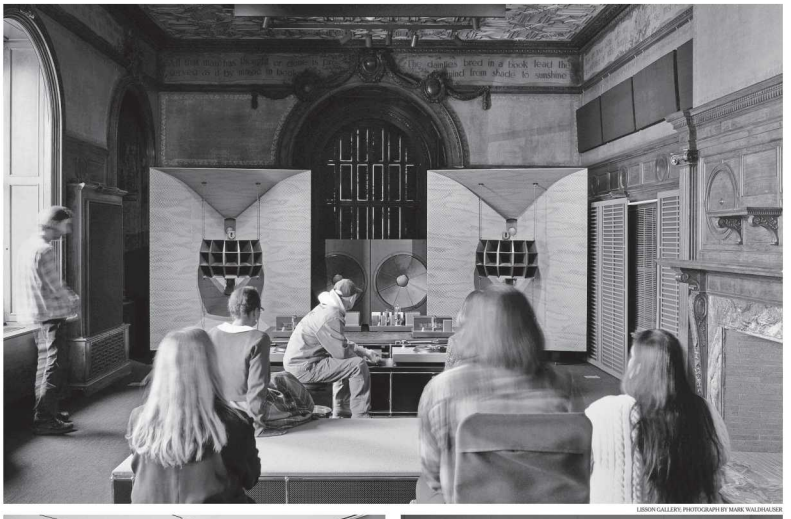
BY WALKER MIMMS

For 120 years — until June 1, 1999, actually, when the file-sharing service Napster went live — the enjoyment of recorded music on your own terms could be something of a chore.

You had to leave the house to find the recording you wanted to hear. (If you even knew its name.) This could take a morning, a month, a year. Once bought, the media artifact, this compact disc, this cassette, had then to be fed into equipment, then kept clean, safe and organized if you wanted to hear it again. For loners, there were additional challenges: Finding music was nonconsensually social, with roadblocks like clerks and technicians, or D.J.s if you hunted on radio.

There were upsides, however. Friendships and rivalries, group listening, gatefold LP sleeves that doubled as joint-rolling surfaces, libraries, mixtapes, the thrill of the hunt, forced exposure to the world.

And gear. By a kind of Darwinian selection, devices evolved to lend dignity, variety, even beauty to this urge we feel to enjoy music without having to hire musicians.



LISSON GALLERY; PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK WALDHAUSER

COOPER HEWITT, SMITHSONIAN DESIGN MUSEUM

Above, the Special Model M phonograph (circa 1935), designed by John Vassos, with a chrome steel shell and velvet lining. Below, the original Apple iPod (2001).

COOPER HEWITT, SMITHSONIAN DESIGN MUSEUM

THOMAS BARRATT

THOMAS BARRATT

The "Art of Noise" exhibition at the Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum in Manhattan displays phonographs, tube and transistor radios, turntables, Walkmans and more. Above, the curves of Wendell Castle's walnut stereo chest (1973), left, standing in contrast to Ron Arad's "Concrete Stereo" (1983). Left, another installation view.

That distant world is now sampled, convincingly and lovingly, by the 85 phonographs, tube and transistor radios, turntables, jockey decks, boomboxes, Walkmans and more on view at "Art of Noise," an exhibition on through Aug. 16 at the Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum in Manhattan. Originating at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, where half its objects come from, it is a classic educational show, for reasons both intended and not, and its main attraction is a pageant of the ways that, from 1910 to 2024, rooms have filled themselves with recorded sound.

Raymond Loewy's New World radio from 1933, shaped like a classroom-style globe, was an almost literal metaphor for the transmission of sound through space. (You chose AM frequencies through a window in its Cuba.) John Vassos hinged his record player, for RCA in 1935, like a briefcase, its chrome steel shell lined in red velvet, business class. The Rock-Ola jukebox of 1947 — *the* jukebox of rock 'n' roll — lights up in the front like a rose window, able to broadcast through the haze of any basement bar this portal to a new religion.

It was in the 1960s that form really started to rebel against function. Wendell Castle's stereo chest in stack-laminated and carved walnut, from 1973, is as big as a bassinet but with sensual, peanut-y curves and a ridiculous lid. Beside it stands its Brutalist opposite: a club D.J. system from 1983 made of concrete and rebar, crumbling like a blast site, by the British Israeli designer Ron Arad.

Dozens of other functional sculptures here represent some of the most stylish, conversation-starting inventions in home audio. Shame that none are up and running, so the sound quality must be imagined. Inlaid screens in the show, at least, play videos of the more visually quirky ones, like Panasonic's Toot-A-Loop of 1971, a handheld radio that swings out into a telephone receiver shape.

The curators, Joseph Becker of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and Cynthia Trope of the Cooper Hewitt, did their very best with those limitations. And the labeling of all these clunky objects is impeccable.

Half the show is on paper, though: hundreds of advertisements, handbills, concert posters, LP sleeves.

This was a mistake. Not that Milton Glaser's poster for "Bob Dylan's Greatest Hits" is boring. It is ingenious. It was the wallpaper of the 1960s. (If you want to know just how far Glaser's Dylan stretched, visit the American Folk Art Museum across town, where the notebook of Henry Darger, the reclusive janitor and painter, lies hand-bound in a copy of the poster.)

The problem is that commercial graphics today enrich our musical lives in essentially the same way as back then. Even onscreen. (Imagine 2024 without "Brat" green or Arial Narrow.) The print things say nothing new and, with half of them relating to live music, they detract from the far more original, even heartbreaking evolution that this show is really about.

This is because, love or lament it, we are speeding past the age of owned music, and past the encumbrance, serendipity, scarcity and preciousness that once attended the cultural diet. Zoomer visitors to this show may never have bought any music themselves.

SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

Left, Devon Turnbull's "HiFi Pursuit Listening Room Dream No. 3," at "Art of Noise." Above, Milton Glaser's poster for "Bob Dylan's Greatest Hits."

Today physical media is a luxury or a statement. The fact is made clear by the commissioned parts of this show. The audio design firm Teenage Engineering has provided chairs inlaid with digital samplers that let you manipulate the speed of preloaded songs. There are other shticks, too.

More sacred is the temporary listening room downstairs by the audio engineer Devon Turnbull. His colossal tweeters and woofers run a playlist of wide sonic range, most of it acoustic based. On Saturday afternoons a live technician plays LPs, and two-inch tapes on the kind of machine that technicians use in recording studios. Come sit for an hour. After 5 p.m., admission is pay-what-you-wish. (Turnbull also has a permanent room at the Public Records club in Brooklyn.)

Unlike the listening room, the devices at the heart of this show were designed for daily use, and looking at them evokes a perverse kind of grief for the way design likes to perfect itself through time.

Look at Dieter Rams, the German design god who is still going strong at 94. Thirteen of his transistor radios, turntables and tape players for the Braun brand are on view. Most are from the late 1950s and early '60s — impeccable, Teutonic, coldly beautiful devices in white-gray and hard-soft geometries. They were once revolutionary. They suggested that listening to music at home could, and should, be a meditation of almost laboratory remove from the mess of the world.

Rams's influence on the Apple designers was an open secret. That earth-quaking first iPod, released in 2001 and on view here, was basically a paraphrase of Rams's T3 transistor radio from 1958.

Though the T3 isn't here, enough other Rams designs draw the sad conclusion that innovation did its job. It is undeniable by the time you reach a cluster of iPods and a mirror-black iPhone, Bluetooth speakers resembling ingots of rubber, and a pair of AirPods on a pedestal like forceps awaiting a surgeon. These electronics reduced friction until everyone on earth could feed from the same trough, so that no one with Wi-Fi lacks the music they believe they want and, safe in that belief, none need speak to another person or engage in risk to consume it.

After 'Ted Lasso,' he's no longer acting. Just playing.

Cristo Fernandez makes an unlikely return to professional soccer

BY JONATHAN ABRAMS

For Cristo Fernandez, fútbol really is life. For three seasons, he portrayed the infectiously joyful and endlessly dedicated soccer player Dani Rojas on Apple TV's "Ted Lasso."

While the show makes a shift in its coming fourth season with Lasso returning to Richmond to coach a second-division women's team, Fernandez is also headed in a new (and old) direction. The 35-year-old recently made his debut for El Paso Locomotive FC of the USL Championship, the second tier of men's professional soccer in the United States.

Life often imitates art. In Fernandez's case, though, it might be the opposite. Two decades ago, he played professionally as a teenager in Guadalajara, Mexico, before a knee injury derailed his career, steering him into a new one — acting. Recently, Fernandez completed a trial with the MLS club Chicago Fire FC II, laying the groundwork for a return to professional soccer.

Fernandez spoke to The New York Times shortly before his debut about rediscovering the sport through "Ted Lasso." This interview has been edited and condensed for clarity.

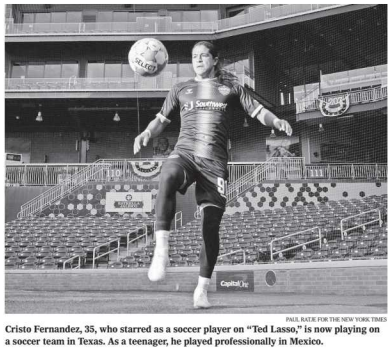
How did your return to professional soccer come about?

I personally tried to get away from fútbol because it was just painful to remind myself of something that I did so many years and that I failed. But with "Ted Lasso," I had to be open to this new journey again and it was part of my job as an actor, that since we were playing professional soccer players, I had to at least look like a professional soccer player and those three seasons and probably five, six years of being around this whole "Ted Lasso" journey, it started to bring this passion on me.

And meeting heroes that I grew up watching, like Ronaldinho and Ronaldo and Mexican idols, Jorge Campos, Luis Hernández and Andrés Guardado, it awakened in me this passion of playing fútbol again. And I guess I became a bit of a psychopath in a way that every single time someone tells me no, I just want to show you yes.

Does this feel like the beginning of a new chapter or completing unfinished business?

This is not me going in the field kicking the ball and then getting applause in the stadium, right? It's really going and performing and being on the pitch. Just standing on a fútbol pitch, it requires so much effort. People will see just one thing. And it's the same with acting. People see you in the premiere of whatever film and they think, "What a lucky guy." But everyone has a story, and for me, it hasn't been easy to get where I've gotten as an actor and even now as a soccer player, this has been like a three-year journey that no one knows.



PAUL RATJE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Cristo Fernandez, 35, who starred as a soccer player on "Ted Lasso," is now playing on a soccer team in Texas. As a teenager, he played professionally in Mexico.

Was there a point when you knew your body could do this?

My dad unfortunately passed away in December, and he's my biggest inspiration of why I'm back playing. Last year, I told him about this crazy dream of coming back, the first thing he said was, "Cristo, you have injuries. Take care of your knees. You're going to take away all this hard work." And I explained to him my reasons and talked to him from the heart and how much this means to me, and then he was like, "OK, I believe in you. If you say you can do it, I believe in you and I want to watch you play." And that just stayed on me and with me.

Has your team treated you like a celebrity or just another player?

Actually, today we had a training and one of my teammates accidentally hit me with the elbow, bad. I felt dizzy. Everything was all right. I'm good. But then they were being like, "He was acting. He was just making a drama." I believe in opportunity and I believe preparation leads to success. But in this regard, I really am grateful with my teammates. I am lucky with this type of people and everyone has good vibes here in El Paso with the team.

Dani Rojas is a character known for his infectious energy when he plays. Do you have that same quality?

As an actor, the biggest dream would be to one day perform a role where I completely change myself and I change my accent and even I gain weight or completely transform myself. But what brought me into "Ted Lasso" was the Dani Rojas character was supposed to be an Icelandic man named Gunnar. And actually at my first table read, it said "Gunnar, played by Cristo Fernandez." And I was like, "How am I going to play an Iceland man? This is going to be a complete failure." But apparently, they really loved my audition and they made the role of Dani Rojas based on me. And that's why I say Dani Rojas is a lot like me. I would be joking if I say that I completely changed myself for the role. We are the same guy.

Have you talked to Jason Sudeikis or any of your castmates about this, and what has their reaction been?

We have a WhatsApp group called "Ted Lasso Gang" where we keep in touch, and as soon as the news got out, they sent a message, all of them, and they were like, "Dude this is amazing, congrats, felicidades amigo," just giving me good vibes and congratulating me. I told them that, "This all comes from my family, 'Ted Lasso.'" I wouldn't be here if it weren't because of them. And it all started with them and with the belief. "Ted Lasso" became a big lesson in my life in every single way, not only professionally, but also the aspects of mental health and belief. "Ted Lasso" gave me the feel to become a child again and dream.

Have you thought about what your celebration is going to be after your first goal?

I don't even know how I'm going to react. I don't know if I'll actually plan it. I will be so emotional and I will be so happy. But maybe a Dani Rojas celebration, just so that fiction really imitates reality. Maybe running in circles. That would be funny.

CULTURE

A forgotten Michelangelo masterpiece

FLORENCE

The Santo Spirito Crucifix rewards close viewing at its home in Florence

BY ZACHARY FINE

One morning, in September of 1962, the art historian Margrit Lisner arrived at the Piazza Santo Spirito in a sour mood. She was abroad in Florence, doing research on crucifixes scattered throughout Tuscany, and on this particular day, by some divinely ordained stroke of luck, she didn't want to go to work in the library at the Kunsthistorisches Institut.

Instead, Lisner popped over to the church of Santo Spirito, where she met with Guido Balestri, the Augustinian prior. Lisner mentioned offhandedly that she was researching crucifixes, and Father Balestri said there was a crucifix tucked away in the cloisters.

He brought her down a corridor toward the old rectory and, sure enough, hanging above the door was a wooden sculpture of Christ, his body thin and toned, and completely naked. The bend of the legs, the shape of the skull — Lisner immediately knew what she was looking at. It was the final chapter of her next book: "The Lost Crucifix of Michelangelo." She had found it.

How a work by the most famous sculptor in the history of Western art was forgotten in a city overflowing with artistic riches is both hard to believe and not. Who today, after going to see the 17-foot David — a naked marble man of eye-throttling scale and beauty — then announces to their parched and crabby relatives: Now let's walk *all the way* across the Arno, to a *very old* church, to see another Michelangelo sculpture but this time one that's small and made of old wood! Not an easy sell. And yet I would argue it's one of the best decisions you could make in your art-journeying life.

As you approach from the nave of Santo Spirito, the first thing you will notice about Jesus is that he looks like a freshly peeled shrimp. The glistening firm body, the jarring nudity, the shrunken waist and limbs . . . the proportions are "disturbingly wrong," as the art critic Martin Gayford has put it.

I caught a glimpse of this shrimpy wrongness while standing in the church this past summer and was disturbed enough to pay two euros to enter the sacristy, where the crucifix is suspended in the middle of the room, from a long rod that hangs more than 70 feet down from the ceiling. I've never seen such a strange and fragile little thing hanging in the air like that, swathed in so much emptiness.

Michelangelo is famous for works of art and architecture that are shocking in their ambition and magnitude: the frescoes of the Sistine Chapel, the Basilica of St. Peter's, the tomb of Pope Julius II, the unruly block of marble from which the David was freed.

The bodies ripple with muscle and action; their features are meaty and full. With the exception of the "Pietà," Michelangelo's work is not known for its sweetness, fragility or visual quiet. Nor is he known for wood sculpture, of which the Santo Spirito Crucifix is possibly the only surviving example (if you exclude the Gallino Crucifix in the Bargello National Museum, which has weak claims to authenticity).

We know that Michelangelo was about 18 when he carved the crucifix in Santo Spirito — that he was young but not unskilled. The year was probably 1493, between the death of Lorenzo de' Medici in 1492 and before Michelangelo left Florence for Bologna in 1494.

Lorenzo was a consummate Renaissance man: a diplomat, banker, collector, power broker, lavish adulterer and major arts patron.

By the end of the 1480s, Florence was running low on top-shelf sculptors. Brunelleschi and Donatello were long dead; Verrocchio was newly dead; and Polaiuolo was busy in Rome. So Lorenzo plucked from Domenico Ghirlandaio's workshop a promising young apprentice named Michelangelo Buonarroti and nudged him toward a new craft.

Both Lorenzo and his son Piero had strong ties to Santo Spirito, and it's likely one of these Medicis set Michelangelo up with the prior of the church, Niccolo di Giovanna. As a favor, Father di Giovanna gave Michelangelo the greatest gift an artist of naked bodies could ask for: unlimited corpses. Michelangelo was provided a room in the convent, near the infirmary, and went about studying the wonders of bone, muscle and skin. (An unauthorized practice at the time but a tolerated one.) As a thank you gift to Father di Giovanna, Michelangelo sculpted a crucifix for the high altar of the church out of lime wood.

The back story is important here because we have to remember that Michelangelo wasn't only studying dead bodies; he was sculpting one. What makes his Christ so uncanny is the clash between the signs of death — the yellowing ivory skin, the dribble of blood from the wounds, the clumping of hair like brown seaweed — and the childlike proportions, the slim rib cage and the undeveloped musculature of the limbs.

Some of the proportional quirks have been chalked up to the original placement of the crucifix on the high altar, which we know because of Michelangelo's early biographers Ascanio Condivi and Giorgio Vasari, as well as a drawing from the 1500s in the Uffizi that shows the crucifix above the old choir. But everywhere you stand, and from every angle, it is no less weird or gripping.

Compare the Michelangelo with other polychrome crucifixes done by his contemporaries in Florence, like Benedetto da Maiano and the Sangallo brothers, or earlier examples by Brunelleschi and Donatello. They are all more naturalistic and proportionate.

But they also play fewer notes on the emotional keyboard. Michelangelo's crucifix makes you feel disturbed, enticed, bereft and moved all at once. What's hard to fathom is that he had 70 more years of life ahead of him when he sculpted this. (We're talking about a man who worked under no fewer than eight popes.) And yet somehow Michelangelo already had command of the full amplitude and palette of human emotion.

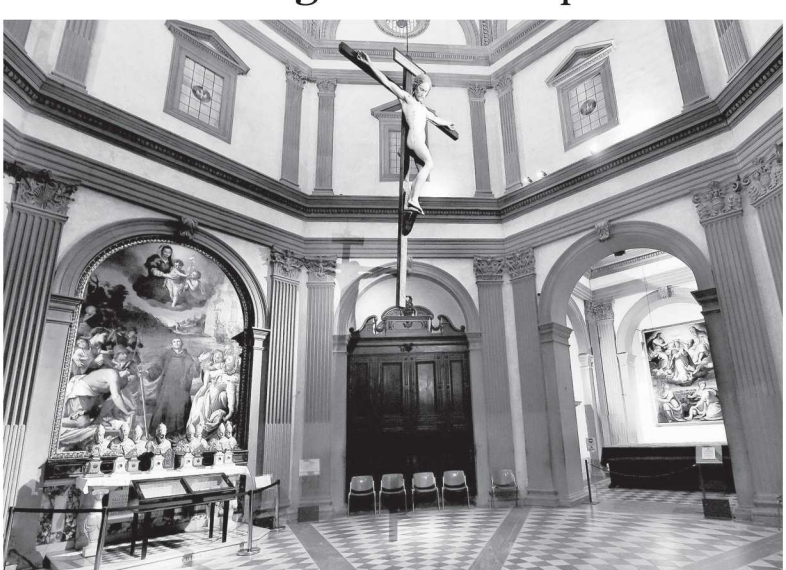
If you visit Santo Spirito, stand as close to the crucifix as possible. Look at the caverns of the armpits, the sprout of hair on the chest, at the way time has nibbled off bits of the toes and fingers. But, above all, look at the face. The whole drama of the sculpture plays itself out there again in miniature. The proportions are off-kilter, with the elongated forehead pushing all of the features to the middle like vegetables in a bowl of soup, and yet the features themselves are stunning, in particular the thumb-like impressions around the mouth and the great privacy of the eyes. As with marble, Michelangelo somehow makes the wood liquid under his chisel.

For decades, the crucifix was stuck in municipal limbo between Santo Spirito and the Casa Buonarroti, where it was sent to be restored. The church repeatedly requested its return, but it wasn't until 2000 that it was delivered home and placed in the sacristy.

Originally, there were a few skeptics about its authenticity, but the evidence in its favor — the descriptions of its creation and installation in Condivi and Vasari, and the back-up of the Uffizi drawing — is about as decisive as you could ask for.

I asked the Michelangelo expert Paul Joannides, an emeritus professor in the history of art at the University of Cambridge, if there were any lingering concerns about its authenticity, and he said, "I didn't think that anyone still had doubts about the Santo Spirito Crucifix. I certainly don't."

One explanation for why the sculpture disappeared is because of its failures and disappointments. Some thought it to be unrealistic and clumsy, an early work that's easy to forget. But I urge anyone to move past that impression. We are not looking at a life-size flesh-and-blood Christ. We're intercepting a private devotional vision. The piece has all of the contradiction, tenderness and mystery that makes some of the best art worthwhile. In those terms, Michelangelo's crucifix is perfect.



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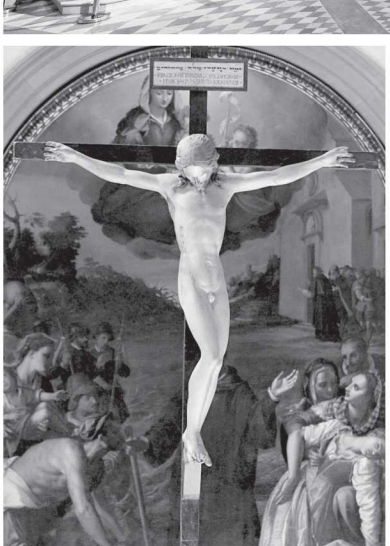

AUGUSTINIAN COMMUNITY OF SANTO SPIRITO, FLORENCE

AUGUSTINIAN COMMUNITY OF SANTO SPIRITO, FLORENCE

Above, inside the Basilica Santo Spirito in Florence, which houses the Santo Spirito Crucifix, left and right. The crucifix was probably carved in 1493, when Michelangelo was about 18.

The prior of the church gave him the greatest gift an artist of naked bodies could ask for: unlimited corpses.

When the family trade is murder

BOOK REVIEW

The Mortons
By Justine Larbalestier and Scott Westerfeld. *Pamela Dorman Books/Viking. 454 pp. $32.*

BY SARAH LYALL

The Morton family — wildly powerful, highly criminal — has gathered for the funeral of young Peter Morton, who met his untimely demise in an unfortunate collegiate climbing accident. If you were a guest at this strange event, you might notice the occasional flash of red in the sea of black — "a scarlet tie, a sprig of azaleas, the cardinal feather in Uncle Orrin's hat," notes Jessica Morton, Peter's cousin and the book's narrator, who herself is wearing an elegant black jacket lined with blood-red silk.

Only "blooded" Mortons, those who have committed a murder in the name of familial duty, are allowed this sartorial flourish. (In another sort of family, they would be called "made.") But the Mortons are hardly simple mobsters, or even simple murderers. They're what you would get if you put the Corleones, the Addamses, the Targaryens and the Borgias together — as skilled at bribery, blackmail and financial manipulation as they are at garroting, poisoning, stabbing and making a murder look like an accident.

The novel is a collaboration between Justine Larbalestier and Scott Westerfeld, married young adult authors whose books include "Liar" (hers) and the "Uglies" series (his). "The Mortons" is for adults, but the authors' Y.A. experience is reflected in its entertainingly improbable plot and fantastical sensibility. At heart it poses a question: If you are raised by a family of charming, ruthless monsters, can you unbrainwash yourself and embark on a different path? Is empathy even possible after such an upbringing?

Jessica, 20, is the family prodigy, the best of her generation: physically fearless, emotionally numb, a perfect liar.

At the age of 7 she successfully passed her "mors curiae," or "death of care," the first major test of a young Morton, which involves (unhappily for this reader) carrying a rabbit with you everywhere for a year and then slaughtering it yourself. The rabbits have names like Mister Fluffernutter and Doctor Pickle. The children love them; that's why they have to die. "Slay the rabbit, spare the child," the family likes to say.

At 10, Jessica helped kill her father, known to the family as Uncle Max, when he suffered from a sudden meltdown and spontaneously hacked seven of her cousins to death with an ax. The repercussions of this incident will reverberate throughout the book. "Abused as a child," a non-Morton tells Jessica, "and you don't even know it." (Alas for this character, he is not long for this world.)

MAXIME MOUYSSET

As is expected by her family, Jessica attends Helshire College, where the students are known as Hellions, and where the Dark Academia portions of the book take place. At Helshire, the Mortons and their fellow "legacy" students from three other ancient crime dynasties take classes in subjects like Disruptive Anatomy (dissecting bodies); Forensic Accounting (financial crimes); and Legacy Chemistry, in which they learn about "the quietest poisons, the loudest bombs."

Under the panoptic eyes of her older relatives, Jessica at first does everything right: excelling in class, killing on command and deploying carrots and sticks to bring rich "ordinaries," as non-legacy students are called, under Morton control. She can improvise with the best of them. "Meet me there. Bring body bags," she barks at a cousin after an unplanned murder. But a series of unforeseen events in her fateful junior year will severely test her loyalty, and her morality.

The book thrums with creative verve, mordant humor and amusing detours into subjects like art, avant-garde fashion and mixology. (A specialty of Jessica's Aunt Veronica: the Upstate Sour, whose ingredients include bourbon, egg whites, a gentle float of Malbec — and a dash of ricin.) Some of the characters are particularly interesting, like Jessica's ruined mother, who lives in the huge family compound but has spent the last 12 years in bed with an unspecified nervous disorder, and Sebastian, an adopted Morton of unusual charisma, who brings some welcome sexy mayhem into Jessica's life.

Sometimes the book feels like it's toppling under the weight of its details. Its rules aren't always coherent. It's hard to understand why some things are OK (slicing your rabbit to death with a razor, as Jessica did) and others aren't (blowing up your rabbit with a bomb, as Peter did). The family graveyard is full of the bodies of Morton children, many of whom appear to have disappointed the family for some reason or other and thus never made it to adulthood.

Whether "The Mortons" is for you might depend, at least in part, on your tolerance for violence, particularly the kind inflicted on innocent people (and rabbits). It's the same question facing softhearted viewers of, say, "Game of Thrones," who might have to weigh their enthusiasm for the thrilling plot and majestic dragons against their queasiness at all the torture. Still, the authors have kindly given Jessica at least a fighting chance of redemption (and maybe a hint of a sequel) at the end. I'd like to see what she makes of it.

Sarah Lyall is a writer at large for The Times, writing news, features and analysis across a wide range of sections.

LIVING

No better time for salad to shine

A fresh, summery spread celebrates the bounty of the farmers' market

BY DAVID TANIS

The glorious produce of summer doesn't happen all at once, but gradually throughout the season. At every moment, we anticipate the arrival of the longed-for cherry, peach, melon, corn, tomato, pepper.

But by now, we're well on the road to plenitude at the farmers' market, with nearly everything on offer at the stands. It all lends a dose of excitement: Cooks can have fun with vegetables. Summer supper can be simple, easy living.

For this month's menu, it's not a three-course meal but rather a spread that hits the table all at once — preferably outdoors, if conditions are right. A recent trip to Turkey has me in kebab mode since I've returned, and skewered meat is just the thing for the small gathering I plan to host. A juicy and colorful tomato salad is definitely in order, as is a savory pilaf, a bowl of irresistible yogurt-tahini sauce and a peach of a peach dessert.

My ideal tomato salad uses as many shapes, sizes and colors of fresh-picked beauties as possible from a garden or farmers' market. Summer is prime time for tomatoes, and it's a wise cook who goes for the tastiest, ripest ones. But a salad of all red ones is lovely, too.

Likewise, make use of new-crop red onions, the smaller the better, for the tart onions that are scattered over the salad. This salad has no vinegar or lemon juice — it relies only on the ground sumac to supply its unique sour notes. Sumac, a spice favored throughout the Middle East, is great for adding lemony appeal when citrus isn't available. Sliced onions with salt and sumac, tossed in a bowl, is all you need. (Though many cooks also add a little lemon juice.)

So, imagine a large platter with a thick layer of sliced and wedged tomatoes and split cherry tomatoes, all carefully seasoned with salt and pepper and drizzled with fruity extra-virgin olive oil. For brightness, there is mint, dill, cilantro and basil, chopped at the last minute. Now imagine it topped with crisp, puckery onions.

For the most tender lamb kebabs, shoulder meat is the best choice. Its marbling makes the meat juicy. Lean leg meat is a little tricker to grill as it tends to taste dry if overcooked. The precut lamb stew meat at the supermarket butcher is often a mixture of the two. To get it done right, ask a nice butcher to cut the lamb for you. Halal butchers will often have just what you need.

After they marinate in olive oil and aromatics like allspice, cumin and garlic, grill the kebabs over coals or under the broiler. The kebabs look beautiful served on a pile of arugula with lemon wedges and a bright, creamy yogurt sauce alongside.

A savory pilaf is easy to make and fills out the table nicely. It's a rice pilaf with toasted orzo and onions, similar to other pilafs made with vermicelli. Use good chicken broth as the cooking liquid for the most stellar pilaf. You can, of course, serve flat breads like lavash or pita if you prefer.

Fruit desserts are the way to go in the summer, especially when good peaches are in. You can keep things mighty simple. Here's how it goes: Take some peaches and split them in two, removing the pit. Slightly underripe peaches work well, or use firm ripe ones. Lay them, cut side up, in a baking dish or skillet and sweeten them with a little brown sugar and honey. Now broil them until they're nearly burned. When serving, the addition of a little salty feta and toasted pistachios gives these peaches a certain elegance. It tastes good warm or cooled. Just be sure to spoon some of the pan juices over, too.

SUMMER TOMATO SALAD WITH SUMAC ONIONS

TIME: 15 MINUTES
YIELD: 4 TO 6 SERVINGS

- 1 small red onion
- Sea salt and black pepper
- 2 pounds medium or large tomatoes
- 1 pint cherry tomatoes
- Extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons chopped dill
- 2 tablespoons chopped cilantro
- 1 tablespoon chopped mint
- Handful of small basil leaves
- 1 tablespoon ground sumac

1. Slice onion crosswise into ¼-inch rings and place in a medium bowl. Sprinkle lightly with salt, then cover with ice water and set aside.

2. Cut the medium or large tomatoes into slices or wedges and halve the cherry tomatoes. Place slices or wedges in one layer on a wide platter and arrange cherry tomatoes on top.

3. Season everything generously with sea salt and black pepper.

4. Drizzle the tomatoes with extra-virgin olive oil. Just before serving, sprinkle the dill, cilantro and mint over the tomatoes, then add the basil leaves.

5. Drain and blot onions dry. Separate the rings and return them to the bowl. Dust generously with sumac and an extra pinch of salt, and scatter over the salad. Sprinkle with more sumac to taste.

BROILED PEACHES WITH FETA AND PISTACHIOS

TIME: 25 MINUTES
YIELD: 6 SERVINGS

- ½ cup shelled pistachios
- 6 medium peaches or nectarines, preferably freestone
- ¾ cup light brown sugar
- ¼ cup honey, plus more for serving
- 6 (¼-inch-thick) slices feta (from an 8-ounce slab)

1. Heat the broiler. On the stovetop, set a small pan over medium heat. Add the pistachios. Toast nuts until fragrant, stirring frequently, about 3 minutes. Remove from heat and cool. Chop roughly and set aside.

2. Cut the peaches in half, removing the stones. Place peach halves in a 9-by-13-inch broiler-safe baking dish or skillet cut-side up. Sprinkle each half with a scant tablespoon light brown sugar. Drizzle each peach half with about 1 teaspoon honey.

3. Place dish under the broiler about 6 inches away from the heat source, and broil until sugar is browned and blackened here and there, and the peaches have softened a bit, about 7 to 10 minutes, turning the dish as necessary. Cool to room temperature.

4. To serve, place 2 peach halves on a plate. Place a slice of feta on each plate and sprinkle everything with chopped pistachios.

5. Drizzle with any juices remaining in the pan or a little more honey if desired.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JULIA GARTLAND FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES. FOOD STYLIST: SPENCER RICHARDS.

LAMB KEBABS WITH ORZO PILAF

TIME: ABOUT 1 HOUR
YIELD: 4 TO 6 SERVINGS

- 1½ pounds boneless lamb shoulder, cut into 1-inch cubes
- Sea salt and black pepper
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon ground coriander
- ½ teaspoon allspice
- Pinch of crushed red pepper
- 4 garlic cloves, grated or smashed to a paste
- Extra-virgin olive oil
- A few handfuls of arugula
- Lemon wedges
- Lavash or other flatbread, for serving

For the Yogurt Sauce:

- ¼ cup lemon juice (from 2 lemons)
- 3 tablespoons tahini
- 3 garlic cloves, grated or smashed to a paste
- 2 cups plain whole-milk yogurt
- Large pinch of sea salt
- Speck of ground cayenne
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

For the Orzo Pilaf:

- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 cup finely diced yellow onion
- Sea salt
- ½ cup orzo
- 1½ cups long-grain rice, rinsed and drained
- 2 small bay leaves
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 cups chicken broth or water
- 3 tablespoons finely sliced scallion greens (optional)
- 1 small lemon (optional)

1. Put lamb cubes in a large bowl. Season well with salt and pepper, then add cumin, coriander, allspice, crushed red pepper and garlic. Drizzle with olive oil. Using your hands, mix seasoning thoroughly into the meat, coating well.

2. Let marinate in the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes, up to several hours (or even a day in advance). Thread the lamb cubes onto short skewers without crowding (about 5 to 6 ounces of meat per skewer).

3. While the lamb marinates, make the yogurt sauce: Put lemon juice in a medium bowl. Add tahini and garlic and whisk briefly to dissolve. Whisk in yogurt, salt, cayenne and olive oil. Let rest, then taste and adjust seasoning. Refrigerate until ready to use, at least 10 minutes. It tastes best fresh, but will last 2 days.

4. Prepare the orzo pilaf, if making: Melt butter with oil in a medium heavy-bottom saucepan over medium-high heat. Add the onions and a little salt, and cook until lightly browned, about 5 minutes. Add the orzo and let brown lightly, stirring, about 2 minutes. Add rice and stir to combine. Add bay leaves and garlic, then the broth. Bring to a boil, then turn heat to low and put on the lid. Cook for 20 minutes, until all broth is absorbed. Remove from the heat and leave covered to rest and keep warm.

5. When ready, prepare the grill or heat your broiler. Grill the skewers or set under the broiler for 2 to 3 minutes per side, turning once, and aim for medium-rare. (You want them juicy but not rare.) Arrange a bed of arugula on a large platter. Set the grilled skewers on top and serve with garlicky yogurt sauce and lavash or other flatbread.

6. Fluff the orzo, sprinkle with the scallion greens and zest the lemon over the top before serving.

FASCINATING
EGYPT

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